

See Me

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See Me

by [ghostlightt](#)

Summary

Clay has a secret. For his entire life, he's struggled with body dysmorphic disorder and hides his face away from anyone and everyone to deal with his insecurity. He's tried to suppress it for years but when George accidentally triggers something within him, he makes a rash decision and flies out to meet his best friend for the first time.

Chaos ensues as he tries to cope with his disorder but also learns to love himself with the help of someone he finds becoming more than just a friend.

-`d I s c o n t i n u e d `-

Notes

Hello all! Thank you for checking out my story and welcome to lots of gay panic and pining.

On that note, I do want to mention that though these characters are based off of real characters, everything in this story is fictional. I don't claim to know anything more than they have shared with us dear fans, and I have taken who they are as people and transformed them to fit the story. So basically, these characters don't represent how they are as people. I'm just an angsty fan who needs to show my love somehow.

Anywhos, I love you all and off we go on this crazy adventure!

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Panic

Clay had just finished his stream when he received an unexpected message that sends a wave of panic through him.

The stream had taken up several hours of his night, leaving him awake in the early morning where the world is still silent as if it's holding its breath until the sun breaches the horizon. Suffice to say, he is exhausted but doesn't regret it. Spending those hours joking with George, Sapnap, and Bad made him happier beyond words.

He figures he should sleep now as his body slumps low in his chair and his eyelids fall without his consent. He yawns, reaching his arms above his head to stretch his back then moves to stand up. His phone vibrates with a new notification, its light a beacon in an overly dark room.

A quick glance at the clock reveals it to be about three in the morning— an odd time for anyone to be texting him and even odder for his friends to start a conversation since they just finished a four hour long stream.

Clay sighs and scoops up his phone as he heads over to his bed. He's about to throw himself down on the ever so inviting mattress when he stops in his tracks.

George: hey I was just wondering...why don't u show ur face lol

Another text comes in.

George: I mean I get not doing it on stream bc

George: u know

George: but u know I wouldn't show anyone unless u told me I could?

Clay's hand shakes slightly at the sudden confrontation . His phone vibrates again.

George: sry that's rlly stupid

George: it was just a thought sry

Despite his apology, Clay finds his heart start to race. It's not that he doesn't want to show his face to his best friend it's just...

He tried to bury the frustration building up within him, switching his phone to 'Do Not Disturb' and lies down with the device falling onto his chest, it's weight heavier than normal.

There's a secret Clay keeps from everyone, something he chokes down as he's even simply around other people, the reason his features remain hidden to many— including George.

People first noticed it when he was a child. He had always loved wearing masks, covering his face with that cheap plastic like a shield that hid him from the world. It was oddly comforting even if the other children in his class would tease him endlessly for it and even teachers would look down upon him. Everyone thought it was strange, but all agreed it must be a phase or simply a quirk that made him unique.

He got older, past middle school and into high school, but nothing changed. He would push his hood up if he couldn't cover his face with something akin to a mask—a baggy hoody becoming the one thing that could calm his racing heart as he looked in the mirror.

That was his issue: he couldn't stand the way he looked. Sure, the few friends he had and his family always said he was good looking, following it with a cheery smile but he saw something terrible in the mirror. Something he had to hide.

The therapist called it body dysmorphic disorder. He'd been sent there when his family grew overly concerned by his behavior and seemed content as he was sent home with a prescription.

He was shocked when it helped, the mirror no longer so daunting even as he continued to ignore it. It was this spurt of confidence that had him create his YouTube channel and his life forever changed.

People always teased him for refusing to show his face but online, his fans were always so kind about it. He always got questions about it and jokes, but it was never mocking. He felt comfortable.

That is, until George sent him that message.

His eyes fall shut, shame eating at him with every breathe. He thought things were getting better for him mentally, but that question only brings up an unresolved issue that he has been ignoring. He should have been able to show his face to George. It's a step in the right direction; one he doesn't know he's capable of taking.

A single tear slips out the corner of his eye.

No, George. I'm sorry.

George feels like an idiot.

He shouldn't have pressured Clay into showing his face. A part of him blames it on the fatigue from waking up obscenely early to stream with his friends but another part of him knows exactly what brought about the taboo question.

It had been about two hours into the stream and at the start of the second round of manhunt when the donation came in. Both he and Clay were streaming at the same time so they kept their donation threshold high to not distract them. So, any notification of said occurrence would immediately steal his attention.

He automatically started reading the message. "Hey George, I just wanted to tell you that I love you and Dream. Also, if you're Dreams' best friend, why doesn't he show you his face?"

A nervous laugh escaped him, trying to conceal the flustered blush that he knew was reaching his cheeks. "Um, I don't know actually but I love you too Angelica and thank you for the donation."

Clay was silent for a very long moment as they kept playing and though none of their subscribers could tell—finding it as a joke similar to George refusing to say he loved Dream—yet a tension weighed on both young men.

George desperately wanted a serious answer to that very question but Clay would constantly dodge it, and George never really tried to ask him when the camera had turned off. Somehow it felt off limits to him—a question better left unasked.

Yet, today he asked that very question.

George groans as his text messages remain unanswered, feeling a gross feeling of guilt weighing on him and churning his stomach painfully. What if this ruined their friendship?

What if this is the end?

He starts to feel even more ill, the urge to throw up or sob rising in his throat and he fixates on his phone with laser focus. He needs to fix this before it gets out of hand. Clay needs to hear his voice and know he's sincere.

George fumbles with his phone passcode, swearing profusely under his breath and cursing his shaky fingers. When the messages page pops up with the call icon right under his index finger, he hesitates for just a moment before slamming down on the button.

He puts the phone up to his ear and as he hears the tone he hopes Clay will pick up. If he doesn't...George takes a deep breath. Maybe he's overreacting. Maybe Clay is just sleeping—it is early in the morning for him after all.

“Yes?”

Clay's voice sounds thick with emotion, a mixture of sadness and frustration, and George feels the blood drain from his face. He definitely fucked up this time.

“H-hey. So um...about that question. I didn't mean it so you can forget about it! Yeah it would be better if you did that. It was really out of line and I'm so sorry and—“

He notices a sound in the background coming from Clay and in his moment of flustered apologies, it takes him a moment to realize Clay was calling his name softly. He immediately falls silent.

“It’s fine, George.”

“Is it?”

“Yes.”

“Are you sure?”

There’s a slight pause after that. “Yes, I’m fine.”

“Okay,” George says hesitantly but decides not to push it. He’s already messed up once today. “I’ll let you get some sleep then. We’re still on to film that video tomorrow right?”

“Yup. Goodnight George.”

“Goodnight.”

He hangs up immediately after saying that, leaving George with the distinct feeling that the gap between them that was originally physical distance seems to have widened somehow and he has no idea how to fix it.

Unbeknownst to him, however, Clay finds a swell of determination flow through him at the interaction, and with a shaking hand he clicks the confirmation button to purchase a plane ticket to England.

Surprise

Chapter Summary

Clay breaks the news to his friends.

Chapter Notes

I can't believe the response from the first chapter! You guys are so amazing and I'm so excited for you to see where I'm going to take this story *mwa haha*

Also I'm aware last chapter was kinda sad but boy oh boy I had fun just writing their dynamic here so prepare for lots of the Dream Team being goofballs.

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When he wakes up the afternoon after the early morning chaos, precisely ten minutes before he has to film with George, Clay realizes he needs to break the news of his upcoming flight to his best friend.

He groans, burying his face deeper into his pillow. Maybe his decision was a little rash, and honestly he's never really planned a trip by himself before. Prickles of anxiety swirl around in his stomach and part of him is tempted to simply call the whole thing off. Yet, in his heart he finds himself determined to overcome what's held him back his entire life.

Clay knows his disorder will never go away but he's done letting it control his life.

He relishes in the the softness of his bed for a moment longer, his fingers curling desperately around his warm comforter before his own discipline and knowledge that George was likely waiting for him pushes him upwards and toward his computer.

He sits in his chair, swiftly powering up the screen as his reflection stares back at him, something he refuses to face still. Thankfully, his screen lights up within a few moments, leaving him to rush through typing in his password and logging in to TeamSpeak.

With a soft notification, he finds himself not exactly in the situation he wanted to be in—George isn't alone. Both Sapnap and Bad had connected themselves to the chat and he blinks with surprise. He thought today's video is just between them?

"Dream!" George's voices chirps then lets out his endearing soft giggle. "Sorry, I know it was just supposed to be us but they joined when I did and I invited them to play with us so I thought it

would be fun?”

Clay smirks. “I’m fine with it. As long as Snapmap leaves.”

“Wow. Gee thanks.”

George laughs. “Yeah Snapmap. Maybe just hit that disconnect button. It’s right at the bottom of the screen if you can find it.”

“Oh my goodness, you guys are being such mean muffins. Leave Snapmap alone!”

“Bad said it!” Clay wheezes, already feeling his earlier anxiety melting away. “He said Snapmap!”

“Wha—? No...”

“You actually did. We all heard you.” George says smugly.

“I hate you all.” Sapnap groans.

“Aw, love you too dude.”

“Wait! Wait! Wait! Would you guys be okay if I streamed this?” Bad pipes up. “Skeppy was telling me to stream more so...”

“Sure.”

Sapnap starts to laugh. “You do realize Skeppy only said that to mess with you on stream, right?”

“Skeppy wouldn’t do that to me.”

“He always does.”

“Okay shush, you muffin heads! I’m starting the stream.”

Clay can’t resist the opportunity. “Hey everyone! BadBoyHalo is a stinky poo!”

“Oh my goodness...”

The stream goes smoothly. Sure enough, about an hour into the new challenge that caused everyone’s inventory to be swapped with one another every five minutes, Skeppy sent a ridiculous donation and spammed the chat. Needless to say, Bad was shocked but no one else was.

It goes smoothly up until the point they’re waiting around for nightfall so Endermen can spawn. Bad starts to catch up with the donations he had fallen behind on when yet another question comes, for the second day in a row, that causes Clays’ heart to short circuit.

Bad’s voice raises suddenly and excitedly. “Oh this is an interesting question! Dream, do you plan on visiting George anytime soon or the other way around?”

Clay freezes.

“Yeah, Dream,” George says playfully. “I thought you said I should go to Florida soon because it’s *better*.”

“I...”

“I thought you muffin heads talked about this before?”

Sapnap scoffs. “Yeah, but Dream has to plan everything like he always does.”

“That is true.” Bad mutes and moves his character to start bouncing around aimlessly. “That’s why we always lose manhunt to him.”

“We don’t always lose! We won twice!”

“That is true.”

Clay is almost relieved that they moved on from the question, hoping to talk to George about it more privately and not with an audience of thousands of people, but Sapnap brings it back up.

“So any plans in the making, oh master planner Dream?”

The others fall silent patiently and all Clay can manage is a soft, “Well...”

There’s a pause but then everyone starts talking at once.

“Wait, you do have plans?”

“Oh my goodness, Dream.”

George’s voice is the loudest of them all. “Dream! I swear if you don’t tell me right now—“

“I bought a plane ticket!”

“To here?”

“What do you mean to here? Where else would I go?” Clay feels a laugh bubbling up within him as George sputters at his response.

“But...you...when?”

“Well...”

Sapnap wheezes at Clays guilty voice. “I think we can kiss master planner Dream goodbye.”

“I’m still good at planning.” Clay quips back defensively but sighs. “Maybe not this time though.”

“*When are you coming?*”

Clay curls into himself guiltily at George’s demand, nervous laughter still peeling from his lips, now slightly terrified of George’s wrath at his response.

“Next week?”

“Next...*next week?*”

“Uh, maybe?”

Sapnap dissolves into laughter and Clay feels a blush rising to his cheeks.

“Dream!”

“How long are you staying?”

“Um...two weeks.”

“*Dream!*”

“It’s fine, George! I’ll get a hotel and plan everything, I swear.”

“No, you’re not getting a hotel. You’re staying at my place obviously.”

“But I don’t want to intrude!”

“That’s my condition since you did this so last minute.”

“I’ll pay for all our expenses then.”

“But I get to pick what we do.”

“I can’t choose anything?”

“No.”

“George—“

“Dream, take it or leave it.”

Clay sighs, leaning back into his chair. “Okay.”

“Okay?”

“*Yes.*”

George pauses for a moment before a delighted giggle escapes him. “Yes! You’re finally coming to England!”

Clay feels a sweeping wave of relief hit him and it’s then that he lets that laughter that had been growing within him grow escape. Sapnap and Bad join him but more out of disbelief than anything.

“This has to be the craziest and most expensive thing you’ve ever done, you...you *muffin*.”

“I have to agree with Bad on this one. Oh my god, Dream.”

“Oh, come on, don’t you remember the time when I gave you guys a bunch of money to spend on Amazon?”

“Yeah, I guess that’s true but you actually planned that.”

Clay wheezes in laughter. “Okay that’s fair.”

“Okay Dream you literally need to start packing,” George says seriously. “And you have to make

sure Patches has somewhere to stay. And make sure you pack warm clothes because it's cold here. And—“

“Oh! Look guys there's an Enderman!”

“Yes!” Clay moves his character excitedly, to which George grumbles under his breath.

“Dream you need to pack, okay? I'm literally going to call you every day to make sure you're ready.”

“Aw, you two sound like a married couple.”

Clay doesn't know how George fares but a fierce blush rises to his face. “Shush, Sapnap.”

He snorts. “I'm serious.”

“So am I, Dream.” George adds pointedly. “You better be ready.”

“I will be. Don't worry about it.” Clay says confidently because though this entire trip was a spur of the moment decision, he still is the same guy who was able to perform ingenious plays in game and elaborate plans for his channel and life.

He started his planning when he started to feel the prickles of both hatred and obsession over his features. He would plan his public appearances, plan his outfits—plan everything just so it was easier to hide. With constant practice, he could sufficiently say he's a pro at it and from here on out, he would let logic supersede his emotions when it comes to this impromptu trip.

So yeah, Clay decides, packing would be no problem.

Meeting

Chapter Summary

They finally meet each other :)

Chapter Notes

Hey, I'm back! You guys are all so kind with your comments so thank you for all that!

This was such a fun chapter to write because gay panic™ which will only get worse because they're idiots and they'll eventually be pining idiots

Jk I love them.

Let me know what you think down in the comments below <3

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So packing turned out to be a bigger challenge than Clay anticipated.

With his senses already heightened on his face and appearances everywhere he went, it made it doubly hard when trying to choose clothes that would help him hide but not seem like he was to George. Outfits with face masks and wearing clothes with the hood up would be out of the question, no matter how much he wanted to retreat into their comfort.

There's another reason he scrutinizes his already carefully picked wardrobe—a nervous feeling fluttering in his core. Clay's no fool. He's had romantic relationships before and the sensation he feels now oddly resembles the jitters he's always had right before a first date. But this feeling, though it is similar to that, can't mean the same thing?

George is his best friend, nothing more...right?

Clay groans. His flight is today and although he squashed his suitcase full of plenty of options that he spent hours agonizing over, he finds himself stuck on choosing an outfit for the day they meet. He wants to make a first good impression. Something that he can try to hide in but not make it seemed like that but also something that is stylish.

He frowns as he checks the time on his phone—he's going to be late if he remains indecisive for any longer. His Uber is meant to arrive in about ten minutes and despite having everything ready to go with Patches dropped off at his parents' house and tickets at the ready, he still has no outfit for the day.

Perfect.

He's so tempted to just fall back onto his bed and sleep away all the building anxiety that makes his chest ache but the other part of him is vibrating with an excitement he hasn't felt in a long time. He can't help but think again that it's that first date feeling, the anticipation at the top of a roller coaster (even though he hates those).

He feels like he's at the edge of a cliff and can't help but fall.

Clay takes a deep breath and decides to choose the first clothes he finds himself reasonably satisfied with, leaving him with a forest green hoodie over black jeans and a beanie atop his sandy blonde hair.

For once, he looks at himself in the mirror beside his closet, his face staring back painfully at him. He can see the bare vulnerability in his eyes, the unadulterated fear at the reality that's being faced.

He's really doing it—he's really going to England.

George is going to finally see him for who he is. It was different when he saw Sapnap because somehow there wasn't that *pressure* when he saw Nick. He'd only felt a small prickle of anxiety, a fraction of the fear that plagues him in this moment.

Somehow George is different.

Somehow George's opinion of him matters more and showing George his face is like baring his

most vulnerable secret to him. He's revealing everything to George by taking this trip, but it's a step he has to take for both himself and for his best friend.

George deserves a friend who can actually look him in the eye.

With that, he pushes his throbbing worry to the back of his mind, grabs his suitcase and goes to wait for his ride to the airport.

George has been waiting at the airport for about an hour in the parking garage.

Of course he *knows* when Clay's plane lands and of course he *knows* that he left his flat way too early but the thought of finally meeting his best friend leaves him restless. He couldn't stand just sitting there waiting at home when being at the airport makes the whole situation seem more real, like it's actually happening.

Especially after what occurred only last week.

The whole conversation about Clay showing his face left George with the feeling that he had caused a rift in their usually stable friendship. Instead, Clay practically invited himself over to George's flat the next day, almost a complete reversal of his timid, pained attitude the night before.

To say George is still confused would be an understatement. He knows his friend well enough to know that he tends to think through everything. Clay is smart and excels at planning, but this

whole scenario is completely out of character. George is actually concerned about him.

That is exactly why he's going to make this the best and most fun trip Clay has ever had.

George has picked out all his favorite and exclusively British restaurants to eat at, different monuments to see, but also accounts for the time they'll undoubtedly have to give to their fans for videos and live-streams. He knows all too well now that YouTubers don't really get vacations lest they enjoy the wrath of their content hungry subscribers.

His phone chimes cheerfully and reflexively George's hand hovers over the gear shift, ready to drive towards the main terminal.

Clay: I just landed and will be out soon :)

George's hand shakes as he shifts into drive, holding his foot down on the brakes as he quickly sends a reply.

George: don't forget to look for a silver car with a cat sticker

Clay: u didn't say u had a cat sticker lmao

George snorts and promptly pulls out of his parking spot, swiftly (but also carefully) getting to the terminal. It's only when he's started to make his down the road and sees all the different signs, cars, and people waiting to be picked up that he doesn't know who he's looking for.

Of course he's looking for Clay, but it's now become a major problem that he has no idea what his best friend looks like.

"Shit," George swerves past a rental car van and manages to park his car under the correct airlines' sign. Should he just wait in his car? There's loads of different silver cars around him, and he now feels the prickle of worry that Clay will never find him in all the chaos.

It looks like he's going to have to get out of his car and hope it doesn't get towed.

He detaches his phone from the AUX cord and snags the keys from the cup holder, locking his car as he cues up Clay's number to call him. The dial tone immediately follows as he scans the absurdly packed terminal, wandering a bit closer to the building and peering inside. Finally, Clay picks up.

"Hey. Where are you?"

"I parked right out front. Where are you?"

Clay let's out a wheezy laugh. "Looking for a cat sticker."

"Oh, forget it. It's not even that big. You know what I look like so you can just find me that way."

"Really?"

"What do you mean really? You're the one who's hidden their face!"

"It was a joke, idiot."

"Sure."

"If you're so sure then you should turn around."

"What? Why?" George frowns but finds himself subconsciously turning around anyway. He's about to comment on how all he sees is random people and his lonely car just waiting to be towed when a tall young man steps in his field of vision with a sheepish grin.

George's gaze follows the young man's hand to where he's holding a phone up to his ear to the sandy blonde hair that's mussed up underneath a beanie and eyes that he knew should be bottleneck green but with his colorblindness are the color of golden wheat. George's lips part slightly, taking in the other young man's tall, built body and his smile that's both reserved and mischievous.

The young man, Clay, steps forward and drops his hand with the phone, his smile falling as his face tilts slightly to the side inquisitively. “Surprised to see me?”

George feels as if the air has been knocked out of him because this can’t be Clay, this can’t be the Dream he messes around with on Minecraft but the voice is unmistakable.

“No one told me how handsome you are!” He blurts out, and immediately wishes he could have taken it back to save himself from embarrassment.

Clay’s golden eyes widen and a spectacular blush darkens his tanned cheeks as a soft smile touches his lips. He looks away from George shyly.

“You’re such an idiot.”

George rolls his eyes and grabs Clay, pulling him into a tight hug. “I can’t believe you’re here.”

The other young man stiffens at George’s sudden touch, for a moment keeping his arms at his side in shock before dropping the handle to his suitcase and wrapping his arms around the smaller young man.

It’s now that the height difference seems to give Clay an advantage as George feels Clay’s chin settle atop his head and a small, pleased chuckle come from him.

“You better not tease me about my height.” George mumbles into his shoulder and he briefly feels Clay laugh before he pulls away.

“I would never. It’s not like I’m a good six inches—“

“If you finish that sentence I swear I’ll make you sleep outside.”

“You wouldn’t.”

“I totally would and I will.”

“I didn’t finish the sentence, shorty.”

“You’re such an idiot,” George laughs then looks at him seriously. “An idiot who’s getting no help putting their luggage in the boot.”

“George!” Clay whines and a puppy dog like expression appears on his features.

All George can think as he sees the expression is: *Fuck* .

He ends up helping Clay with his luggage which earns him a beaming smile and endless teasing as they start the drive back to George’s flat.

Realization

Chapter Summary

Gay panic

Chapter Notes

Heyo!!!

We've got some more angst and gay panic in this chapter to which I do want to say that Clay's POV on his disorder is described in both a naive and bitter way during this chapter to show he's really not overcome it and he's just trying to avoid dealing with it at times. So basically it's not an accurate representation :)

Anywhos, I love you all and let's witness these boys be idiots lmao

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The first five minutes of the drive back to George's flat consists of Clay not making fun of how dirty his car is, no, but how *clean* it is.

"Any normal person's car has like one piece of garbage in it," Clay says, peaking into all the cup holders and under chairs.

George rolls his eyes, and takes one hand off the wheel to prevent Clay from rummaging around anymore. "Stop."

"Like this looks and smells like a new car." Clay snickers as he flicks George's hand.

"I swear—"

“Did you deep clean your car just for me,” George can see Clay swooning dramatically from the corner of his eyes. “Aw, George.”

He flushes because he totally cleaned it for Clay. Truth be told, he’s a really messy person and his car had been full of old cups and straw wrappers. He’d spent several hours before driving to the airport clearing the rubbish, vacuuming the carpet, and wiping down every surface until it gleamed.

The whole conversation brings a light blush to his cheeks. “Literally stop.”

“You definitely cleaned it. There had to have been trash in here before.”

“I don’t know, Dream, some people actually like to have a neat vehicle.”

Clay tosses his head back and laughs. “You realize you don’t have to call me Dream now? We’re not online.”

George groans, trying to keep his eyes on the road as he smacks Clay. “Shut up. It’s hard to remember that.”

“It’s hard to remember we’re not online?”

“No, you idiot! It’s hard to not call you Dream!”

“I mean you could still call me that, but it would make me sound like a weirdo for people who don’t know us.”

It’s then that George sighs, sobered by that. “It’s not that it’s a bad thing but I do find myself getting noticed a lot. So technically people do know me when I’m out?”

He risks a glance over at Clay as he says this, expecting another teasing remark; not seeing his friends face pale.

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s...nothing, don’t worry about it.”

“Is it about why you won’t show your face on camera?”

There’s another long pause, and when George glances over he can see Clay staring out the window sullenly.

“Can we change the subject?” He says softly, almost barely audible and George picks up the cue that again, the one that indicates he may have overstepped boundaries.

He scrambles for a new topic. “So tomorrow I’m going to take you to downtown London where there’s a whole bunch of cool stuff. I would say we could ride the London Eye but you hate heights so there’s actually a 4D theatre inside if we want to do that. Also there’s lots of good fish and chips places to go to. Also there’s some vendors who sell cinnamon roasted peanuts on the bridge by Big Ben. Also—“

“Slow down, George,” Dream wheezes. “I’m going to be here for two weeks so we don’t have to rush things. It’s going to take a moment for me to get over jet lag and literally all I want to do right now is sleep.”

George glances at the clock on his cars dashboard. “It’s right around dinner if you want to eat before you go to sleep.”

When he turns to face Clay, the puppy dog eyes are back and damn he can feel his heart melt and implode all at once.

“Can we actually?”

“Yeah.” It comes out softer than he intends and clears his throat. “How does pizza sound?”

“You know a way to a mans heart.”

That comment earns him another swat on the head from George who's trying furiously to control the sudden and dark blush returning to his cheeks.

When they get to George's apartment, Clay feels like exploding from how much pizza he ate but also exhausted beyond belief.

They'd both entered the pizza place of George's choice and Clay thought he knew pizza. That was until he was bestowed with a new level of pizza that completely destroyed any of the Floridian competition.

He pretty much moaned at the first bite he took, to which George laughed smugly, and declared that though America won the Revolutionary War, England won pizzas.

Clay punched him in the arm and told him he was an idiot.

Then about two hours later, he stumbles through the door of George's humble abode. It's nearly ten at night which would normally be considered early for both young men but seeing as he had jet lag and he got George to confess to deep cleaning his apartment and car all day, they are both ready to fall asleep.

Clay yawns makes his way through the entryway and immediately feels a ball of fur cuddle itself against his leg. Clay looks down with glee as a grey spotted cat meows incessantly to him, its pupils blown wide with curiosity but also happiness at a new friend.

He immediately abandons his suitcase in favor of kneeling down and burying his hands in the soft fur of George's cat.

“Oh my god, Pooper, what are you doing right in front of the door?”

Clay wheezes. “Pooper? I thought it was *Robert* .”

George flushes a magnificent shade of red. “It is but I don’t know, everyone makes fun of that name.”

“Aw but Robert loves it, huh? It’s better than Pooper.” Clay coos at the cat as he strokes his fur, ignoring George as he rolls his eyes.

“I thought you were dying to sleep but okay, just play with my cat as I go to bed.”

Clay perks up at that. “Where do I sleep?”

George lets out a big yawn and waves him to come forward through the kitchen in the entryway and to the left of a small living room. He opens the door to the left (the right door Clay notices to be the bathroom) and George presents a bed to him.

As much as Clay wants to just bury his face in the pillows and slip away into dreamland, he immediately notices what’s wrong with the whole situation.

“Wait, you don’t have a second room?”

George cocks his head to the side. “This is your room.”

“No, you idiot, this is your room. I’ve seen it on stream.”

“Okay, yeah, normally it is but for these next two weeks you’ll sleep in my room.”

“Then where are you sleeping?”

“The couch.”

“What?” Clay feels a surge of guilt go through him. “No way. I’m not kicking you out of your own bed. I’ll sleep on the couch.”

George rubs his hand over his face. “I’m not putting you on the couch.”

“Well I’m not putting *you* on the couch.”

“What happened to letting me decide everything on this trip?”

“I’m pretty sure it doesn’t apply to the sleeping situation.”

“We could just share.” George says after a long moment. “Since neither of us are going on the couch.”

Clay feels his heart skip a beat for a reason he can’t explain. “Are you sure?”

“Yes, dumbass, now can we go to sleep?”

Clay laughs and finally enters the room, still feeling frazzled, to drop off his suitcase in front of the closet area. “Wow, George. *Language.*”

“I don’t care. I’m tired.”

Immediately after stating such fact, George face plants on his bed, his face completely concealed by the pillows.

Clay raises an eyebrow. “Are you really going to sleep in those clothes?”

A groan from the pillows responds to Clays question and he simply chuckles and digs around his

suitcase for his sleepwear. “Well, I’ll be in the bathroom changing if you want to change too while I’m gone.”

Another groan answers him and Clay quietly exits the bedroom to the bathroom he just noticed. It’s only after he closes and locks the door behind him that the small hiccup in his heart at the prospect of sharing a bed rises into full on panic and shock.

How did this happen? Also, why is it such a big deal?

He leans against the bathroom sink, hanging his head while taking deep breathes. This isn’t normal. He’s shared beds with friends before but never before has he felt this rise unless it was when—

Oh.

Oh no.

His brain tried to scramble to pick up another plausible reason but it’s like looking for a needle in a haystack: it’s impossible. There’s only one explanation and it’s been there for a very long time.

All their flirting while filming had been just a game but somehow it started to make Clay’s heart race at every time he could get George flustered or laugh. Then he found himself looking forward to seeing George on stream, seeing his best friends face that always made him blush and smile. Then it was that bundle of butterflies—that first date feeling— when he was on his flight to now where he stands in George’s bathroom.

Then there was the time when he first saw George in person. When the other young man turned to face him after Clay told him to turn around over the phone, Clay felt his heart stop and his mind race.

His first thought was how unfair it was that no one told him how pretty George is in person.

George’s dark brown hair was slightly windswept and his dark brown eyes were blown adorably wide at the sight of him. His whole presence reminded Clay of standing too close to a fire as it was comforting and delightfully overwhelming at the same time.

There's only one explanation for it all and as he reaches it, his heart oddly seems to stop racing and he feels at peace.

He's in love with George.

He curses under his breathe. Relationships never went well for him. He'd dated many people in his past, both men and women, but it was always his disorder that frustratingly got in the way. They would want to take pictures together. They would want him to stop wearing beanies, or face masks, or his hood. They would want him to smile and grew tired of how he was constantly depressed. They didn't understand why he hated the way he looked because he looked fine to them. They always pushed him to go to a therapist or do drugs to solve him because 'this feeling will go away.' He knows painfully well that it won't ever go away and it's that notion that labels him as a high maintenance partner, someone to break up with and move on from.

He can't become like that to George. He's one of a precious few people in his life that he knows he can't live without. Hell, they talk pretty much all day every day. He *should* to try and bury these feelings and forget all about it.

He sighs at the thought and swiftly changes into his pajamas, a hoodie with the hood up and flannel bottoms, and wanders back into the room. He figures he's been gone for a long time and decides he probably shouldn't have to knock.

He stops in his tracks.

George had changed into a pair of grey flannel bottoms but still holds a shirt in his hands, ready to be slipped on. Clay's eyes are inexplicably drawn to his bare torso and can feel the blood rush to his cheeks while his heart stops.

Fuck .

Oblivious to Clay's inner struggle, George finishes dressing himself and flops back down onto the bed. He lets out a big yawn and stretches out his entire body as he casually slips under the covers. It's then he notices Clay, who's still standing in the doorway trying to restart his heart.

"What are you doing just standing there? I want to sleep this century."

This snaps Clay out of his stupor. “Shut up.”

He sets his normal clothes down on top of his suitcase and slowly drags his feet towards his side to the bed. He curses at his hands for shaking slightly as he peels back the comforter and he crawls in tentatively and silently.

George flicks off the lamp by his bed at that, mumbling something barely intelligible that could be something along the lines of: “Good night.”

Clay finds himself staring into the dark, and though he found himself earlier to be resolved against exposing his feelings to George, the sheer intimacy of this very moment seems to strike a tone within him.

He came to England to grow as a person. His disorder wouldn’t go away but he’s here to work on that, right? Which means it could extend to relationships as well, surely?

Maybe he doesn’t have to do anything about it either. He can just watch George, enjoy his presence, and wait for his friend to make a move if he feels the same way.

He smiles at the notion of George ever confessing his feelings to him. If he ever did, Clay would change. He can do it this time. He will gain his confidence. He knows he can.

He should try to bury these feelings but he decides instead to embrace them. He turns to face George who’s already fast asleep, tiny snores coming from him and Clay pulls his hood off his head with a fond smile.

“Good night, George.”

Waffles

Chapter Summary

Clay has a nightmare and they're both idiots when it comes to cooking

Chapter Notes

Did you come here for angst and fluff? Well, prepare for a tooth rotting amount of both lmao. They're so cute I can't.

Also me and my friends call George 'gogy' alongside like everyone on Twitch so be prepared because I'm totally going to use that.

Ily and enjoy :)

Check me out on:

Wattpad: anisa__angel

Twitter: ghostlightt

TikTok: ghostlightt

Clay finds himself sitting at his computer, still groggy from sleep but ready to stream. He signs into Twitch and stretches absentmindedly as he goes live and waits for his fans to enter the chat.

It's then he realizes something is wrong.

Everyone is talking about a face cam and a face reveal. Clay looks desperately at the stream he's sending out to thousands of people and realizes that all he has on is his face cam. He tries to close it out, end the stream, do anything but he can't and instead of a positive reaction everyone is laughing. They say his face is ridiculous and ugly. The views keep on rising and the teasing continues, every donation another jab at him.

"I can't believe I thought you would be cute. Big disappointment."

"Ew omg, if I knew he looked like that I would have never subscribed."

“Ugly af.”

Then suddenly George and Sapnap are on TeamSpeak and instead of being saving graces they’re just laughing and laughing and laughing.

“You know they’re right, Dream.” Sapnap says and George agrees with the worst insult of them all.

“You should never show your face again.”

“Yeah, Clay.”

“Clay—“

“Clay!”

Clay wakes from the nightmare in a cold sweat. His chest heaves for air and he’s surprised to feel tears falling down onto his cheeks.

He turns toward the direction of his name, and finds George beside him in the bed, his friend’s eyes wide and full of concern as he studies him.

Clay wipes a hand down his face, trying to conceal the tears he knows George has already seen. “I —shit. Sorry for waking you.”

“It’s okay, Dream.” George says softly, his voice a little slurred and husky from sleep. “Do you want to talk about it?”

Clay immediately shakes his head. He can’t tell George about his disorder and even more importantly, he can’t tell him about the George in his dream. He’s better off not knowing this nightmare haunts him every night.

“Do you need a hug?” George asks shyly, his brown eyes not meeting Clay’s and his body

fidgeting.

Clay wipes away more tears that embarrassingly keep falling and nods desperately, to which George's gaze softens.

"Come here." He says softly and pulls Clay forward into an embrace.

The other young man's face settles in the crook between Clay's neck and chest, warm air puffing comfortably onto his collarbones. One of George's arms is bent against Clay's side, a sensation that sends chills up his spine as the other rests softly on Clay's chest. Their legs entwine and though more tears fall, Clay feels safe and thoroughly comforted.

"Is this better?" George whispers softly, his breath against Clay's neck a sensation that makes his heart race.

Clay doesn't have the words to respond, a part of him afraid that if he speaks he'll start full out sobbing. This nightmare has been a plague to him pretty much ever since he met George all those years ago, his face a source of fear in that he was afraid his friend would reject him once he saw it.

Instead, George had called him handsome and a part of him hoped the nightmare would end there. George thinks he is handsome.

You should never show your face again.

Clay pulls George toward him tighter, a gesture that maybe in the morning he'll be embarrassed about but he's tired and emotionally drained and his primal need for comfort takes over.

George responds to his movement, nuzzling closer to him and though both of them feel as if maybe they're intruding on some sort of unspoken friendship rule, they both are too comfortable to move. Instead, George feels better knowing he's comforting his best friend and Clay feels better knowing he's not alone and his nightmares aren't true at all.

They fall asleep like this only moments later, happy to be in each other's arms.

The next morning George wakes up to a whole lot more warmth and comfort than he's used to. Normally he would be accustomed to a nice chilly British morning that cut through the heating and left him and his cat snuggling for warmth. He wouldn't procrastinate, just simply get up, make himself a cup of tea, and start to plan his day which usually just consisted of talking to Clay and Nick while playing Minecraft. This time however, as he opens his eyes and is greeted to a new sight, he reconsiders getting up as soon as he wakes.

Clay's face is right beside his and George can make out a peaceful smile on his friend's face from the spot his head resides on Clay's chest. He's all too aware of his body encircling his friend like a koala to a tree, but it's so comfortable he only clings tighter especially after he remembers how they got into this position.

His mum always gave him hugs when he was a child after nightmares or simply whenever he got upset. Hugs were the language that his mother spoke to express her empathy and give comfort, something George relies on when it comes to anyone close to himself. So of course it was his immediate response when he saw tears in the golden eyes of his best friend, but why did this hug feel different from any normal ones he gives?

As he lies here in Clay's arms, still locked in an embrace, he feels a sense of equality in the position. It's no longer for comforting a friend but more for a sense of shared comfort as humans. They both seem to have found peace in each other's arms and a vehement desire to never let go. It's something George has never experienced before and something that prevents his arms from even moving.

A big yawn sounds right next to him and George witnesses Clay's eyes flicker open sleepily before drawing down to George himself, a soft smile quirking his lips upwards.

"Good morning," he says softly, and George can't help but notice how sleepiness seems to hang

onto Clay's words attractively, causing the other young man's voice to become deeper and husky.

George can't help the smile that reaches his own lips. "Hi."

George partly expects him to mention the situation they both find themselves in or something of the sort but Clay's eyes fall shut as he mumbles. "I'm hungry."

This gets George laughing. "Last night you were complaining about how full you were."

"Yeah, well, now I'm starving."

"Oh so now I'm starving you?"

"Yes."

George fake gasps. "I'm offended."

Clay snorts, his eyes opening again and there's a playful twinkle in them. "So am I."

"Ugh, fine. I'll get up and make breakfast since you're so needy." George starts detangling himself from Clay's arms, and is surprised to find Clay's grip not lax completely, as if he's dealing with the sudden separation as hard as George. He turns away from the other young man as a blush dusts his cheeks, still thinking about how he found Clay last night, but lets go and hopes that his friend is okay now.

Once fully sat up, George stretches his arms above his head, feeling the satisfying cracks in his back, as he yawns. Normally at this time he would be itching for a cup of tea to feel awake but oddly, he feels quite alert. There's only one explanation and it simultaneously makes his heart skip and sad as he doesn't really have an excuse to do it again the following night.

The truth is, sleeping in Clays arms made him have the best night's sleep he's ever had.

Trying to beat down the even darker blush to his cheeks, he gets up and starts to head toward his

kitchen. It's now that he feels the morning chill creep into his limbs and it makes him shiver. The only saving grace of this cold is the satisfaction he's going to get when Clay finally gets up and complains about the temperature. It should be interesting.

Despite being well rested, George doesn't really feel like making a legitimate meal for the two of them. Not that he's really good at cooking anyway, but somehow with a guest living with him, things seem to be different. He oddly wants to be better for Clay, but alas, the best he can do at the moment is some frozen Eggo waffles.

Not that those are bad anyways.

He pops a couple in his toaster and starts to pull out the butter and syrup when a very sleepy Clay emerges from the bedroom. The hood that George noticed he wore last night and was off this morning is now back on his head, tousling up his blond hair over his forehead in an endearing way.

Clay rubs his eyes as he yawns, then burrowes himself deeper into his hoodie as he starts to shiver. "Are those waffles I smell?"

"Yeah. I hope that's okay."

Clay snorts. "I love waffles."

"I sense a 'but' in that statement." George says with a raised eyebrow as he moves to take the first batch of waffles out of the toaster.

"Well," Clay says with laughter in his tone. "I didn't know you couldn't cook."

"Oh wow. My best friend and guest is insulting my cooking skills in my own house. How do you know I'm just being lazy this morning and settled for Eggos?"

"Well, for one, you're using a spatula to take the waffles out of the toaster."

George freezes, looking at what he's doing then looks up at Clay imploringly. "This is how I always do it."

Clay bends over, releasing his wheezy laugh. “Oh my god, you’re hopeless. Here, let me help.”

Clay swiftly comes over to the toaster beside George, their shoulders touching as he simply reaches forward and pulls one waffle out with his bare fingers.

“Careful!” George yelps, staring at Clay with wide eyes as his friend seems to have no regard for the wellbeing of his fingers. Clay simply rolls his eyes.

“Aw Gogy, are you worried about me?”

George shoves him with his shoulder. “Don’t call me that!”

“Ow!”

George gasps as he realizes he shoved his best friend right as he was reaching for the second waffle, causing his fingers to slip and burn against the hot metal of the toaster. Immense guilt and concern fills him and without hesitation he grabs Clay’s hand and drags him over to the sink.

“Fuck, I’m so sorry.” George turns on the sink with his right hand and with his left plunges Clay’s hand under the water. “I didn’t notice what you were doing so I just, I don’t know, didn’t even think about it and—”

Clay laughs, forcing George to silence. “It’s fine. It doesn’t even hurt that bad.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah,” Clay says and shoves George lightly. “I think you’re overreacting.”

George scoffs and finally looks up from their intertwined hands up to Clay’s features, trying to assess if he’s lying. It’s only then that he realizes how close they are.

Clay's face is just above George's and their bodies are pressed together as they stand by the sink. George notices a small blush begin to dust Clay's tanned cheeks and he looks away quickly.

"I think your hand should be fine now." George says, trying to clear his mind of what just happened as he drops Clay's hand. "Unless you decide to be a baby about it."

"Me? You were the one who freaked out!"

George whacks him lightly. "Sure, Dream."

"Sure, *Gogy*." Clay hits him back.

With that they lunge forward at each other, hitting each other and dancing around the kitchen to evade the other's touch. They both get several good hits in and they're both laughing uncontrollably until Clay eyes the open food pantry where George got the syrup. He dives for it and emerges, brandishing a package of flour.

"Dream, no—"

"Oh, George!" Clay creeps closer to George, a wicked glint in his eyes.

"If you throw that at me, I'm evicting you."

Clay hesitates for just a second before grinning. "Worth it."

The next thing he knows, George is covered head to toe in a white powdery substance. He freezes, his mouth ajar in a horrified and aghast gape as he attempts to brush himself off. He's dimly aware of Clay laughing at him, but he has only thought in mind—revenge.

"Oh, Dream!"

In one fell swoop his hand grabs the syrup and the next, the thick amber liquid is being thrown at the once laughing Clay who cries out as he is covered with it.

“You little loser!” Clay gasps out between wheezing laughter, and George finds himself doubled over as well, never mind the mess they find themselves in.

Needless to say, it takes them a couple hours to get cleaned up and ready for the day and when they finally do, the waffles they made were disappointingly cold and limp.

ice cream and ferris wheels

Chapter Summary

they expose the trip on twitter while going to the london eye

Chapter Notes

Ok??? So um???? Dream went to the UK irl???? The fanfics are literally writing themselves people, I swear. Also love Wilbur but dreamnotfound is life so...anyways. The whole twitter section of this is kinda based off the torture they've been putting us through.

Also, for this chapter and the next if my portrayal of the london eye is off I swear I tried. Last time I was there was like 6 years ago so this is based off what I remember lmao

Anywhos, I'm gonna freak out about dream in the UK more and write

Enjoy!

Once they step out of their Uber in the middle of London (George refused to find parking downtown), Clay immediately starts shivering. He severely underestimated how cold England would be, even with all of George's teasing and pestering for him to put on something warmer.

He'd worn a hoodie and a beanie, like the day prior but somehow it was no longer enough as he sees his breath puff in delicate clouds before him. "How do you even live here? This is the worst weather in the world."

George glances over at him with a smirk. "The worst in the world, huh? I bet some countries would have something to say about that."

"I'll change my mind when I go to those countries. For now, this is seriously the worst."

His friend snorts in disbelief. "Sure. Also, I was thinking. Shouldn't we post something about this whole impromptu trip on our Twitters or something?"

Clay sighs. Somehow, a part of him had forgotten about their fans in the swiftness of the trip, the anxiousness of his disorder, and the joy of finally meeting his best friend. His whole career seemed

to have been sidetracked by this one trip, and it's now he realizes he should be taking better care of all his fans who are probably wondering where he has been for the past week.

Yet, just because he forgot doesn't mean he couldn't have some fun with it. "What if I released a tiny video of you on Twitter and just wait to see what people think?"

"Why not just tell them?"

Clay whips out his phone, immediately swiping over to the camera and pointing it at George who now stands there, arms crossed and his lips stuck in a pout. The camera seems to emphasize how small he really is with his oversized GeorgeNotFound hoodie hanging off him in a stark contrast to the skinny jeans he wears.

"Dream, I swear." George says with a roll of his eyes. "Just tell them."

He can't help but laugh softly at that. "Tell them what?"

"Okay, well they're definitely going to figure it out from this stupid little video you're doing."

"Oh, so now my video is stupid? Hey!"

George lunges for his phone, but Clay dances out of the way and all he has to do is raise the phone above his head to his full height. Poor George tries to jump and reach it but a groan escapes his lips as he can't.

"You're literally so annoying." George grumbles as Clay waves the phone playfully.

"Oh, George."

"Stop."

"Oh, George!"

George starts to walk away down a random street, his smaller frame almost instantly blending in with the crowd in front of them. Clay rushes after him, a grin plastered on his face as he swiftly opens Twitter and uploads the video, watching it once through to make sure he doesn't expose his features in it. George meanwhile pouts beside him, refusing to even look at Clay.

"Someone's being a sore loser about their genetics," Clay says after a moment and nudges him with his shoulder.

"Someone's being an idiot."

Clay can't help but notice a little crack in George's facade, a miniscule quirk of the corner of his lips that gives away the humor his friend is still carrying within him. Clay searches for a way to get his friend to emerge from his shell, and a grin makes its way to his face as he spots something in the distance ahead of them.

"I'll buy you ice cream to make up for it."

George's head snaps up at the offer and Clay is startled to see his friend's eyes go wide and puppy dog like. His heart feels like it's ready to explode at the sudden adorableness of it all, and it's then he realizes George is waiting for him to say whether it's a joke or not.

He points ahead. "Pick out anything you want."

"Anything?" George says slowly.

"Yeah."

"So I can buy all the ice cream I want."

"Okay, so maybe just one thing."

"You said anything!"

“Well, I take it back!”

“But you agreed to anything!”

“And now I’m disagreeing to it!”

“I’m going to get mad at you again.”

“I’m still buying you ice cream.”

“Okay, maybe not.”

Needless to say, the man at the quaint ice cream stand has a few raised eyebrows when the two of them show up, bickering like it’s the end of the world.

About an hour later, with several mishaps with ice cream dripping all over George’s favorite hoodie and the internet explosion over Clay’s video, they make it to the London Eye.

The two of them stand at the foot of the famous ferris wheel and George groans as he opens up Twitter. “Dream! There’s literally so many people asking about what’s happening.”

He opens up his own social media and bites his lip nervously. Initially the idea had been funny and granted, seeing George lament over all the new messages he as they wait in line for the theatre is a sight to behold, but now...

Nearly all the comments are about him exposing his face and that they won't believe that he's in the UK unless he does so. It's such a small thing, something that other influencers would probably shrug over and forget about but to him, he feels a sudden pressure. It's as if he can't breathe to his full capacity anymore and now there's a sort of obligation that has been created for him, an obligation he cannot fulfill.

Isn't one video enough? Does he really have to always bare his deepest insecurity to be taken seriously?

"Well," George says, pocketing his phone. "Looks like we're next."

Sure enough, they're finally being ushered forward but instead of heading towards a building where the theatre might be, they're headed directly for the monstrously tall ferris wheel. Clay immediately digs his heels into the ground, his heart starting to race as he looks at George with wide eyes.

"Why are we headed that way?"

His friend frowns and looks down at their tickets. "I don't know. This doesn't make any sense."

The man who's working at the ferris wheel waves them forward more desperately, and even worse than going on something that is way higher than a human should ever go is drawing attention to himself. Everyone in the line behind them are looking at him and George and he feels *exposed*.

He grabs George's arm and marches them forward, desperate to be out the judging eyes of the people behind them. His friend's eyes widen and he starts sputtering.

"But Dream! You hate heights! We can just—"

"It's fine."

"It's not! We can just say we bought the wrong tickets and—"

They reach the base of the ferris wheel alongside the rest of the group they'll be riding with and Clay takes a deep breath. "It'll be fine. I'll just use this as a chance to get over my fear."

George searches his face critically. "Are you sure?"

"Yes."

His friend looks down, and shifts his feet slightly. "Well, if you get scared you can always give me a hug or something to make you feel better."

Clay's heart skips a beat at that and all he can manage is a stiff nod as all the blood in his face rushes to his cheeks. Hopefully George will think it's just him getting flushed from a gust of invisible wind rather than him blushing.

That's when the ferris wheel turns and the glass container in front of them swings open, its maw ready to consume him and whisk him up into the sky. He freezes, feeling rooted to the spot and unable to even think about entering the horrid looking contraption.

A hand intertwines itself into his, something that has that horrible beet red blush return to his features and he turns to his right in surprise. George stares back at him, his brown eyes soft and a shy smile playing on his lips.

"It'll be okay."

Clay nods and with that, they walk hand in hand into the ferris wheel, ready to soar into the clouds.

sightseeing and hugs

Chapter Summary

Clay hates heights

Chapter Notes

Hey guys! I'm so sorry for the break between chapters. I've been going through a couple really hard weeks so it's been tough to even work on this alongside everything that's been happening. Thank you for hopefully understanding :)

Also this chapter is a bit shorter than usual (and fluffier) but I promise next chapter will be a lot spicier ;)

Thank you for reading and enjoy!

Clay squeezes his eyes shut for a moment and George notices his whole body beginning to shake. He seems closed off, as if he's suffering but refuses to ask for help—or rather his fear of heights is making him forget its there.

George steps forward, his hand separating from Clay's to instead pull him into a hug. The other young man stiffens at the touch but George notices his trembling begins to ease and after a brief moment, it stops completely. Then, arms circle around his small body and like when they met at the airport, Clay rests his head atop his.

A fierce blush makes its way to George's cheeks but at the same time there's a deep sense of peace. There's a gorgeous view of London spanning out before them—the bridge over the water, Big Ben—the whole lot. The best part of it all, however, is the arms encircling him and the sense of belonging that it brings. He loves the way Clay's head settles atop his own and how he was the one who quelled the fear in his friend.

“Thank you,” Clay says softly and George can feel the rumble of his voice against his own body.

He sighs. “I mean, it was my fault we ended up here. If I hadn't bought the wrong tickets then—“

“It's okay, George. Really.”

“Are you sure?”

Clay laughs and holds him tighter. “You’re helping me work on my fear, remember?”

George smirks. “Ah yes, your deepest darkest fear.”

Clay’s body seems to freeze at that but he’s so relaxed the next moment, the movement so swift that George doubts if it even happened as his friend chuckles.

“You do realize I’ve said I’m afraid of heights on stream, right?”

George gasps in mock surprise. “You revealed your deepest, darkest, extra secretive secret?”

“Well, yeah.”

“Your super duper secretive, deepest, darkest, hidden secret?”

George can imagine Clay rolling his eyes. “You’re such an idiot.”

“Me an idiot? You’re the one who revealed their—“

“Oh my god, stop!”

George wheezes, unable to continue the joke as pure unadulterated joy rushes through him and steals his voice, replacing it unstoppable laughter. He can feel Clay shaking behind him with laughter as well, and the taller young man dips his head down to the nook between George’s shoulder and neck, burying his face there as he tries to control his wheezing.

After calming himself down a bit and as the Ferris wheel starts to climb higher, Clay keeps his face closed off from the world on George’s neck, a groan coming from him. “Ugh. I can’t even bring myself to look back up.”

George feels his whole face turn from what was a light flush to completely red as Clay seems to nuzzle in closer, his breath tickling George's skin.

He finds himself tumbling over his next words. "I mean, if it helps, you can just stay like that."

Clay hums. "Okay."

His face is probably a tomato at this point. "I can describe to you what I'm seeing if you want."

"You will?"

"Yeah."

"Just don't tell me how high up we are." Clay says softly and George nods with a chuckle.

"Alright." George turns his body to face the outside, Clay adjusting so he holds his smaller frame from behind before burrowing back into George's neck. "Well, I can see a couple bridges going over the water. There's lots of boats today actually so that's pretty peng."

Clay wheezes. "Peng? What the hell does that even mean?"

"Wait, you don't say that in America?"

"Wha—? No!"

"I don't know, it means cool I guess. Anyway, before you rudely interrupted—"

"Hey!"

“—there’s also Big Ben which is also pretty peng.” Clay snorts at that. “And there’s literally so many buildings it’s crazy how much you can see. It’s actually getting a bit more sunny right now so you can actually see more. It’s really pretty.”

They’re at the height of the Ferris wheel when Clay starts to peak his head out again, likely out of curiosity. George can feel his breath catch as there’s no long that constant warmth against his skin. There’s that trembling that starts up again in Clay’s body and as George turns his head slightly to look at him, his golden eyes are blown wide as he takes in the view before them.

“Do you like it?”

Clay hesitates, his eyes seeming to grow wider by the minute before shaking his head furiously and tucking his face down and out of sight.

George finds himself leaning in towards Clay, his head resting on top of the other young mans as an empathetic smile plays on his lips, content that this is the position he will get to be in for the rest of the ride.

He figures he should try to take Clay’s mind off the situation though.

“So you know, there’s this new plugin I’ve been thinking about doing...”

About five minutes later the Ferris wheel, to Clays absolute delight, comes to a full stop and the doors open to blissful, cold freedom.

He feels a pang as he breaks away from George, but can’t help retaining some sort of contact by grabbing his friends hand and yanking them out glass bubble prison as fast as possible. The other passengers don’t even contest them, likely seeing his pale and sweaty complexion alongside crazed eyes and figuring they should let the insane person go first.

Where everyone seems to back away, George's expression seems to light up when meeting his and he can literally feel himself melt as they start to walk away from that hellish contraption. His body starts to relax again but the selfish part of him keeps a hold on George's hand as they walk forward through the London streets.

George casually looks down at his phone innocently, though Clay can feel him start to swing their interconnected arms back and forth. "Sapnap just texted me."

Clay raises an eyebrow. "And?"

George looks at him with an exasperated expression. "What happened recently that would make him text me about twenty times?"

"Well..."

"The internet is blowing up apparently." George groans. "My phone is literally going to crash because of how many people are going to tweet at me."

Clay hums, swinging their hands even higher. "I don't even want to check."

"You don't—oh my god Dream, you're literally the one who started this whole mess. On livestream may I add."

"Fair."

"*And* you're the one who took that video."

"Okay but you bought the wrong tickets for the London Eye so I would say we're even."

George narrows his eyes at him, but doesn't say anything more. Clay counts that as a silent victory and relishes in it alongside the happiness he feels with George right beside him, walking the London streets hand in hand.

Chaos

Chapter Summary

Shit hits the fan for our fave boys.

Chapter Notes

So uh...don't hate me after this chapter. You probably will though because oh buddy does shit hit the fan. So much angstttt and a mean cliffhanger (no I'm not sorry).

I await your angry responses :)

George would consider last night to be both chaotic and blissful.

When they got back to his flat at the end of the day, they were both super exhausted to the point where Clay simply flopped down on the couch. The hood from his sweatshirt flipped up at the motion and partially covered his tousled blonde hair but not enough that George couldn't see his eyes dropping shut, already falling asleep.

George had taken his shoes off slowly then approached his friend, shaking his legs which were sticking off the edge of the couch due to his height. "Clay, let's go to my bed."

A groan followed in response.

George shrugged. "Suit yourself. If you wanna stay on an uncomfortable couch all night be my guest."

He started to walk away when Clay turned slightly and made grabby hands toward him. George obliged and took them, helping hoist his sleepy friend upwards. Their hands remain intertwined as they make their way to the bedroom, where upon seeing the comfortably made bed, Clay rushed forward and face planted himself into the fluffy pillows.

George wrinkled his nose in disgust at how his friend still had his shoes on and was about to protest when soft snores started to come from his companion. A soft smile then starts to play on

his lips and instead of waking him up, George simply sat on the edge of the bed and set to work unlacing Clay's shoes from his feet.

Then, as that was complete and Clay's dirty shoes sat in their place on the ground, he considered washing his face or at least his teeth but a wave of fatigue hit him hard. He simply sighed and crawled into bed right next to Clay, his eyes drooping as he checked Twitter. He should make a response to everything, especially after that stupid video Clay took.

Just as he opened the app however, he felt an arm snake its way around his stomach and pull him away from his current spot on the bed. Before he knew it, George had been pulled into a tight bear hug by a sleeping Clay who smiled contently at the touch.

A fierce blush made its way to his face and he tried to ignore the situation by thinking of a proper response for his fans. What should he say? Should it be formal?

Another soft snore came from Clay as he snuggled closer into George's torso and a smirk played across his lips.

He quickly typed in his response: *Did you know?? Dream has stinky feet??? And he snores????*

He admired his handiwork, then he managed to reach far enough from within Clay's strong hold to plug in his phone and just settled down, a content smile on his features as he fell asleep in his best friend's arms.

So as he wakes up to that sort of heaven the next morning, he figures he should try cooking for his best friend again because although dragging the six foot tall giant to bed was chaotic, he has never felt more grateful for Clay being there.

Clay finds himself awaking to the smell of food burning. He already knows that George is a bad cook after the whole ‘cooking Eggo waffles with a spatula then pouring syrup all over his poor guest who had limited clothes’ but this is worse than that. It smells like the house is on fire and as he opens his eyes, there’s smoke starting to trail into the bedroom.

He starts to leap out of the bed and as he does, a loud screeching beep starts to blare from the fire alarm causing Clay to slip on the hardwood floor in his scramble to the kitchen. A sharp cry from George has him back on his feet in an instant and out the door.

His heart races as he’s greeted by a horrible smoky sight. Light gray smoke comes from the sink where he can see a pan lying on its side, faint flames still emerging from the contents it holds. George is hidden within the dark smoke and Clay swiftly jumps up and disables the alarm before plunging into the thick smoke to reach the sink.

He immediately turns on the water, detaching it from its faucet to aim at the flames, defusing them within seconds. Then, he looks around him desperately, searching for his smaller friend only to find him a couple feet away on the floor.

Clay drops down beside him and George has his hands and face curled into himself, his whole body shaking.

“George?”

The slighter young man raises his head and to Clays’ dismay, he finds tears falling from George’s eyes. His eyes are red and puffy and his lips pressed tightly as if in massive amounts of pain. Clay immediately leaps into action.

“Where did you hurt yourself? Let me see.”

George trembles as he obediently brings his hands out from where they were tucked close to his chest, but the very movement sends a soft whimper from his lips and more tears to trickle down his cheeks.

Clay gently grabs his wrist to examine what’s wrong and hisses at the sight. George’s left palm is a

bright angry red and to his horror, skin along the edge of his hand is already starting to shine brightly and bubble upwards.

“Oh, George...”

He snuffles, his voice shaky. “I tried making breakfast but better this time but then all of sudden it was on fire and then I was bringing it to the sink and the handle melted and I had to grab it with my hand and...and...”

Clay pulls him upwards and toward the sink, one hand gently still holding George’s wrist and the other turning the water cold so he can run his friend’s poor burn underneath it. “Accidents happen, Gogy. We’ll fix you up in no time.”

George nods tearfully, his entire body fidgeting as he waits for the water to cool down and the tears won’t stop bursting from his eyes. Then, as Clay tests the water briefly he pulls George’s hand underneath it. George cries out at the sudden sensation but his body visibly relaxes after a moment, looking at the water as if it’s some sort of miracle.

“Hold it there.” Clay orders and looks around the kitchen, rummaging around to hopefully find some sort of cloth. He remembered his aunt, who was a nurse reminding him to never use ice on a burn but a nice cold cloth. He resorts to using one of George’s dish towels and just as he’s about to wet it, he sees one of the fragile blisters on his friend’s hand burst under the contact of the water.

George whines at the sight and Clay asks desperately. “Do you have any sort of bandages?”

George looks miserable at the question. “I just—I never thought...”

His big brown eyes start to well up again, but Clay fiercely shakes his head. “It’s okay. We’ll just have to go to the store and pick up some bandages and ointment. We’ll use this until then.”

He brandishes the towel he had grabbed, wets it and begins to wrap it gently around George’s hand. George moans slightly at the action, his eyes closing softly at the sensation and Clay feels his face heat up.

He should *not* be thinking like that in a time like this.

He clears his throat, trying to ignore the flush he can feel crawling across his cheeks. “So where’s the nearest store? Because I can drive but it would be illegal and pretty bad considering you drive on the wrong side of the road.”

George glares at him, to which Clay is certain the pain is making him in a less humorous mood because if looks could kill, that one would. “There’s a store like a mile from here. We could probably just walk.”

Clay just gently places his hand on George’s back and steers him toward the front door. “Well then, looks like we better get walking.”

George nods stiffly and as they emerge out into the cold air, he nuzzles himself in closer to Clay’s side as they start their trek toward the store.

What was supposed to be a mere mile seemed to stretch eons because when they finally arrived at their destination, Clay was shivering from the harsh winds and George’s face had gone sheet white with the amount of pain his hand was giving him.

They both walk in through the automatic sliding doors and the wave of heat that hits them both as soon as they enter has them sighing in relief. For a brief moment, they both linger at the entrance, simply soaking in the sudden warmth but then Clay pulls his smaller companion toward the medicine aisle.

George, to his surprise, seems to snuggle in closer to his body as he says softly. “I hope we find something soon. My hand is killing me.”

A quick glance downwards to the bit of exposed skin on his hand has Clay feel a spike of crippling worry course through him as bits of skin have now started to peel backwards, exposing raw skin and horribly large sized blisters. Maybe they should have gone to the doctors instead of relying on a convenience store...

“I think this is what we’re looking for.” George points with his free hand toward the shelf right beside them and as Clay glances over it, he grins as he sees special burn bandages, ointment—everything they could ever need.

He’s just about to pluck one of the ointments down to read the label when from down the aisle he hears a sharp squeal and an exclamation of: “Oh my god! I think that’s Dream and George!”

Then, all his years of pretending he’s never had a problem and these past several days of pretty much forgetting he has a disorder at all vanishes as he hears the click of a camera and his vision goes white with the flash.

The last thing he remembers is George crying out his name as his body hits the ground and then, there’s nothing.

It's All Downhill From Here

Chapter Summary

Clay learns about the full aftermath of what happened at the store

Chapter Notes

Wow you guys really spammed me with those lovely comments! Well, hello, I am back and here we are again with some more angst. Prepare yourselves lmao

And like the title suggests, there will be so much more angst and problems for our boys ahead. Sorry not sorry lol

Also may or may not be working on art for this fic so get hyped for that

Be sure to check out my socials for possible updates and more writing :)

Twitter: ghostlightt

Wattpad: anisa__angel

The first thing Clay hears as he swims back toward consciousness is a steady beeping noise and the smell of antiseptic. Then, sensation travels down his body and he's dimly aware of the thin, somewhat soft sheets he lies under that do nothing to prevent the chill of the room from seeping into him. He's about to open his eyes to indulge in his curiosity of where he is when he hears a voice cut through the fog, something that has him pause before revealing that he is awake.

"No, Sapnap, I really don't know what happened."

A pause.

"Don't give me that. Of course I know what *happened* but I'm talking about what happened to Clay."

The voice sounds stressed and once more of the fog clears from his head, Clay recognizes the voice to be George's. He's about to open his eyes at that, but the next comment has him hesitating again.

“No, he hasn’t seen it yet.”

Seen what?

His mind strains to think of what happened and he nearly gasps as it all comes rushing back to him—he’s in England, George burned his hand, and then that deafening flash of a photo being taken. He can’t hold back the shiver that makes its way through his body and also the nauseating disgust that starts to churn his stomach.

Coming here had seemed like the best decision he could have made. His body dysmorphia seemed to fade away with George by his side and he finally felt normal. Now, however, that heaven he has been living in has crumbled around him. He feels jittery and jumpy and the urge to cover his face.

Those people have a photo of him now. Is that what Sapnap and George are talking about? Is the photo all over online now? Is it like the nightmare he’s been having for years with people telling him that he should never show his face again?

He finds that he's having a hard time breathing and the once slow and soothing beeps beside him starts to race. He decides to not pretend to be asleep anymore and uses his hands as a shield to cover his features as the world seems to spin around him.

This can’t be happening. It just *can’t* .

“Clay?”

George’s voice sounds slightly guilty but also soft, as if he’s approaching Clay as he would a cornered animal. He peeks his eyes out in between his fingers.

“Is it...? Did they...?”

George looks down. “They didn’t post the photo they took of us.”

Yet, George looks anything but relieved. There’s still that pained expression that furrows his brows together and purses his lips alongside the fact that he still refuses to meet Clay’s gaze.

“But?”

George looks up at that, and he feels a jolt rush through him as his friend’s lip wobbles.
“They...well, one of them has a decent following on Instagram and...”

The blood starts to roar in Clay’s ears and he closes his eyes. “Say it.”

“She streamed the whole thing and all her followers started to spread the clip of it around.”
George’s voice breaks and as Clay opens his eyes again, he starts to notice tears threatening to fall from them. “It’s all over Twitter, Clay. It just spread so fast and now everyone has seen it. I don’t know what to do.”

Something between a sigh and a sob falls from his lips and he shakily holds out a hand to George.
“Can I see it?”

“I really don’t think you—”

“I need to see it.” His voice comes out desperate, like a child pleading to their parent and he winces at how pathetic he sounds. He knows he probably shouldn’t see the video and with his heart racing he knows he’s spiralling but he needs to know what damage is done.

George takes a painfully long moment to pull it up on his phone and hands it to him. His hand clutches the device with sweaty palms as he stares at the video before him.

For a split second, he resolves himself to give George back his phone and pretend like nothing ever happened. Perhaps if he just never sees the video he can pretend he still holds his anonymity, if just for a little longer.

He’s aware of his whole body trembling as he knows he can’t avoid it. The logical part of his mind would constantly remind him of it and like a monster, it would eat away at him until he would be completely destroyed. He needs to see this, even though there’s a chance that this would destroy him anyway.

Clay’s grip on the phone tightens and raises his trembling finger to press play.

The scene starts to unfold before him as a group of giggling girls make their way across the aisles. They point out odd objects that the store held and tease each other good naturedly. It's quickly apparent that they're simply at the store to take fun photos of themselves as they pose and there's the telltale flash that follows.

He almost smiles as the girl holding the phone turns it to herself with a round, young looking face as she beams at her followers. "Yo, if I get half a million followers soon maybe I'll go skydiving or something and I'll post it on my TikTok."

"Dude, you hate skydiving!" Her friend interjects and the girl with the phone laughs.

"Yeah, but I'll do it anyway!"

"Wait, Chloe, stand in the middle of the next aisle and we can get a cute photo. Oh, wait there are some people there."

The humor that Clay had found himself immersed in immediately fades as he recognizes him and George in the middle of the aisle the girls find themselves in. His vision starts to blur as one of the girls, Chloe, poses anyway right as the girl with the camera gasps in surprise.

"Oh my god, it's Dream and George!" She yelps right as her other friend takes a picture of Chloe, the flash lighting up the entire aisle.

He sees both himself and George turn, his own eyes widening in pure fear. He watches as his eyes seem to roll up in his head, and his body starts to lean over. George immediately starts to reach for him as he falls, his head hitting the ground with a deafening crack.

The girl with the camera rushes forward, her camera view getting skewed about as she runs and there's one final glimpse of himself, on the ground with a small bit of blood visible, before she drops her phone to the ground and it goes black.

"Clay? Please wake up!" George's voice comes in desperately and the girl's voice cuts in.

"I'm going to call an ambulance!"

And then the video ends.

He stares at the screen for what feels like an eternity until he starts to notice large drops of water hitting the screen. Startled, he reaches up to his own eyes to realize he's crying.

The full situation starts to hit him as he realizes the video has several million views with thousands of retweets. Everyone has seen him now. They've seen his face. It's going to be exactly like his nightmare and he'll never be able to make a video on his channel again.

He devolves into full out sobs as his mind spirals downward—his ears ringing and body curling into itself—and in his heart he knows that the career that he loves is over as he knows it. People will take one look at his ugly face as he faints on camera and never want to see him again.

“Clay?”

He can't move. He can't think. He can't *breathe* .

Arms encircle around him tentatively and he clings to them like they're a lifeline as he drifts further and further into the depths of his mind. The hold around him tightens and as he feels the mattress weigh down, he's able to fully curl himself around the warm presence. The darkness seems to recede as he's held and his surroundings become more and more clear.

George is lying on the hospital bed beside him in a position that suggests that Clay had pretty much pulled him down. He doesn't seem to mind, however as he holds Clay close to him, one hand behind his head as George hides him against his chest. It's then that he feels the soft rumble of George's body that he realizes his best friend is talking. His body no longer feels like he's drowning and blessed sound returns to his ears.

“—a video about it. We can do a serious Twitch stream like last time. I can do all the talking if you want.”

“Why?” He asks, his voice barely audible and ragged from the tears that refuse to stop.

George sighs, the rise and fall of his chest feeling full of trepidation, and seems to hold Clay

tighter. “We need to let our fans know what’s going on and hopefully get them to stop spreading that stupid video around. They should respect your privacy and I know it’s kind of inevitable that people are curious and everything but seriously. The person who posted that video is a complete a —“

“George.” His voice comes out clearer than expected, and a dizzy calm sweeps over him. “It’s fine. It’s over.”

George shifts against him so he can peer down at Clay’s expression, and a look of pure confusion and concern has his brow furrowed and head cocking to the side. “What do you mean it’s over?”

“No one’s going to watch me after that.”

George’s frown deepens. “I don’t understand.”

A flash of irritation overcomes him. “I mean after that video, people are going to hate me. I probably look worse than people expected and fainting on camera? It’s just—I can’t—“

George’s expression softens and the hand that had settled behind Clay’s head begins to move, carding through his dirty blonde locks affectionately. Clay finds himself closing his eyes at the action, feeling more tears slip out but it’s less of panic and more of mournful resignation.

“Clay, look at me,” George’s voice says softly and he obeys, startled by the vulnerable display of concern and caring on his friend’s face. “No one hates you because of that video. If anything, people are worried about you.”

“They’re just doing it out of pity.” He says, dropping his gaze again but then George’s hand moves from his hair to draw his chin back upwards so their gazes can meet.

George’s eyes blaze with passion as he says firmly: “It’s not out of pity. People care about you. I care about you and we want you to be happy. As for how you look? Who cares what they think?”

“I do,” he mumbles.

“Clay, listen to me.” George says and a faint blush dusts his cheeks. “You are extremely attractive and I don’t think you see that. Everyone loves you and the way you look.”

A burst of warmth blooms within him at the words and though he’s loathe to believe them, the sheer power in which George spoke ignites something within him.

He finds himself lost in George’s gaze, the warmth spreading until it encapsulates his entire being and his tears stop falling. Almost subconsciously he leans forward, dangerously close to George’s face but neither of them move away, transfixed in each other’s piercing gaze.

They both start to move closer when the sound of footsteps entering the room has them both drawing apart, the spell broken.

A nurse then enters the room, her gaze only briefly flickering at the position they’re in before settling on a soft smile and busying herself with checking his vitals. He retreats back into his mind for the process, letting George do all the talking and when prompted he would nod and move the way the nurse wanted him to. Although there’s a warmth present in him now from George, he can’t seem to shake the growing chill within him that makes his anxiety to a level he hasn’t experienced since he was a small child. It takes everything within him to even act normal in front of the nurse.

And somehow, he knows things will only go downhill from here.

addressing the silence

Chapter Summary

Clay gets out of the hospital and they decide to do a stream talking about what happened.

Chapter Notes

Alas, I have been resurrected from the dead.

In all honesty, I know I've been gone for a long while and I'm really sorry about that. I really love this story and want to continue with it but I've been struggling these past couple of months. I've been in the hospital twice during this time for mental health issues and I'm just trying to make it through every day. I've been feeling better lately and writing finally seems like something I can do so I'm back!

So, expect more chapters soon and also I started a Twitch channel if you want to join me in struggling through Minecraft :)

The channel name is 'ghostlightt.' Shocker, I know.

Thank you all for being so patient and being so supportive throughout the story so far. Avast! We continue!

That afternoon Clay was allowed to leave the hospital, something that brought him relief beyond words. There were just too many people there all the time and when forced to wear the hospital gowns, people stared at him too long. They want to know what's wrong and their eyes are full of prying pity. Besides, after what happened, all Clay wants to do is crawl into bed and lock himself away from the world. Maybe he wouldn't ever come out.

Of course a part of his brain knows that this behavior is childish, possibly even irrational. That's it though, the whole instance seemed to take back years of progress. His confidence feels shattered beyond repair. Mirrors were doable but now all it does is raise these dark feelings within him. People were tolerable but now he feels as if they're stealing the breath from his lungs.

The world was open to him and for once he was willing to accept it, but now monsters prowl it's vast expanse. He can hardly trust anyone anymore.

On the ride back to George's apartment, he dared himself to open Twitter. That dark part of his mind seems to grin maniacally within him, whispering his darkest fears over and over again.

Another part of him wants to believe what George said to him.

Everyone loves you and the way you look.

It seems so naive to even consider the notion but he takes a deep breath, ready to face the faceless demons behind the screen and...oh.

Hope you get better Dream <3

Omg he's hot

The person who posted this video should be ashamed af. Get well king

Wait?!?! NO?!?!?!? DREAM ARE YOU OKAY?!?!?

WTF IS WRONG WITH PEOPLE

I hope we hear from him soon bc I'm worried about my son

I'm actually crying this broke my heart

There's thousands more tweets bursting from his notifications and hundreds more worried fans wishing him well in his private messages. Despite it all, he can't help but be stunned.

He's always had what therapists like to call 'negative thoughts.' At this point he pretty much accepts it into his way of life, a constant resignation of drowning beneath the surface of radiant positivity. Trying to swim up earned his place here, the spotlight of all these prying eyes but oddly, everyone is okay with it? With him?

He feels like he's finally broken over the water, earning that forbidden bliss that's been dangled tantalizingly over him. It must be a dream, ironic as the name is, and Clay can't help but feel numbingly in shock as George carefully leads him inside and onto the couch.

“Dream?”

He’s firmly aware of George’s voice, his mind still reeling from everything that has been forced upon him alongside the concussion the doctor announced he had.

“Clay?”

He looks up then, meeting George’s warm brown eyes that are wide with worry.

“Yeah?”

His voice comes out small and timid, something that makes George soften. He reaches for Clay’s hand, intertwining it in between his own.

“Are you okay?”

The question seems to have more weight than the gentle way it’s said.

“I’m going to be honest,” he says slowly, “I don’t know yet.”

George doesn’t seem surprised by his answer and instead squeezes his hand a little tighter. “That’s okay. This whole thing is...”

“It’s a lot.”

He lets out a shaky breath. “Yeah it’s a lot. I don’t really know the best way we should handle this.”

Clay chews the side of his lip and finds himself fidgeting. “You did mention doing a Twitch stream talking about it. Maybe...maybe we could do that?”

George seems to freeze at that. His warm brown eyes seemed to search Clay's expression thoroughly, as if looking for any crack in the glass castle of a facade that he had created. His gaze narrows, and it's then that Clay remembers that even if George had just met him face to face only a few short days ago, his best friend could read him better than anyone.

"I can do all the talking." George says, and Clay can't help the wave of relief that courses through him. He can already envision the chat flying and his voice failing him, something that had never happened lest he was around the very young man who sits beside him.

He settles with just solemnly nodding, relying on George's intuition to understand how much the gesture means to him.

"Do you want to do it now?"

Clay's heart stops. Sure, he agreed to said proposal but another part of him seemed to think that it wouldn't happen any time soon. He'd have time to mull the whole situation over, perhaps even forget the dreaded Twitch stream he agreed to. Though a part of him knows and strongly desires to fight back against the ruthless internet that seems to have turned on him, another part of him hoped to ignore what happened. Pretend, rather.

Yet, he knows the internet. He knows his fans. People have been trying to dox him ever since his channel saw a huge rise, and with every little hint he reveals about himself, they seem ravishly hungry for more. Hell, he'd revealed his hands in an unboxing video and posted a couple photos of himself in his merch on Instagram and everyone lost their shit. He's seen those very clips and photos recycled everywhere he goes, almost making him regret even doing that small gesture.

So yes, he concludes that as much as he wishes he could ignore everything and hope the subject will be dropped, it won't be. He knows that and that's why he also knows he has to do something about it.

His voice seems to fail him and he tries to speak, so he again settles for a curt nod. George's hand tightens around his as he stands. Clay mimics his movement and feels a sharp ringing rise up in his hearts alongside his heart painfully trying to carve its way out of his chest with every beat. All his limbs seem to have lost their strength and it takes every ounce of remaining resolve to put one foot in front of the other to George's bedroom.

He leads him in and gently sits Clay down in his very own chair, a promise voiced on his lips that

he'll be right back before his presence is gone. Clay starts to lose confidence as George's hand slips away from his and he's alone.

I don't think I can do this.

Yet, he's never been one to back down from a challenge. When people told him he couldn't beat the course in Parkour Warrior on MCC, he did. When people told him he couldn't beat four hunters in Manhunt, he did. And when people in his life told him his channel wouldn't make it, it did. He can be stronger than this version of him that trembles at the very sight of the computer monitor before him.

You can do this.

He takes a deep breath and finds himself turning on George's computer himself, still full of trepidation but now filled with the desire to overcome and get this the fuck over with.

George comes back just as his monitor displays his login screen, holding one of his kitchen table's chairs in his arms. He seems to notice a new spark in Clay's eyes and a smile spreads upon his lips, unbeknownst to him causing his friend's heart to swell.

George sets down the chair and reaches across Clay to enter his password, with OBS already open alongside Minecraft, TeamSpeak, and Google Chrome (which had an absurdly large amount of tabs swamping it). His mouse clicks on the Game Capture icon and lets Minecraft fill the screen, a comfort to Clay with its happy familiarity and the message of '<3' floating in its home screen.

They both seem to take their time glancing over everything, but in reality there's nothing much to look over—they're both just stalling. Then, Clay can feel George's gaze on himself and he slowly turns to face him, noticing an unanswered question in the other man's features.

He sighs and straightens himself up in the chair. "I'm ready."

He's not.

George hesitates, studying him with a very soft expression, before turning away and pressing the button that makes them go live.

As per usual, there's at first only about a hundred people there and when Clay blinks, there's thousands. He feels his breath catching in his throat as the viewership climbs and climbs and to his absolute shock they have surpassed a hundred thousand viewers.

"What the hell," George whispers beside him, his eyes bugging out at the very sudden popularity his stream has gotten and Clay can only numbly nod, his resolve cracking at the sight before him.

Why did he think he could do this again?

"Um, hi!" George finally speaks up, and the chat flies with greetings and even with the rapid speed of it, Clay can see his name repeated like a mantra throughout it.

He can feel himself starting to shake, all his determination from before fading like sand running through his fingertips. He can feel the urge to run, simply run until his legs give out and he has no idea where he is but at least it's far far away from here. He—

George reaches over, grabbing his shaking hand, and just like before it grounds him. He spares a glance to his best friend who stares back at him with concern etched all over his features. He only breaks eye contact to quickly mute them before turning back.

"We don't have to do this, you know."

Clay shakes his head fiercely.

George frowns. "Okay. Just...tell me if you want to stop at any point."

Another nod.

The grip on George's hand, his lifeline, tightens as they're unmuted.

"Hey, everyone. Today's stream is going to be more serious but I think you all probably knew that." George says slowly, constantly glancing at Clay to make sure he's alright. "I've got Dream

with me here and um, we just wanted to talk about some things that have happened recently. So I'm sure you all heard and maybe saw the video of me and Dream and...well saw what Dream looks like."

The chat is flying now, some fans asking in confusion what they're talking about and others apologizing and sending large messages filled with hearts. Clay's heart drops at the other percentage of people commenting.

Fucking finally.

If he had done a face reveal, this wouldn't be a problem.

What's the big deal???

Who tf cares

George continues but now Clay has tears rising, unbidden, to his eyes. "So we're asking for you all to stop spreading the video around. Please respect our privacy and we know what's done can't be undone but it would mean a lot if the video could be taken down."

George's gaze flicks over to the chat where the main question that's being asked is: *How is Dream?*

He glances over to Clay as if waiting to see if the other man wanted to respond, but he's so cold and numb. He's lost feeling in his fingertips, and a sharp buzzing runs through his veins. There's too many people. There's too many—

"Dream is okay, guys. He's...yeah, he's okay."

They're not satisfied. They're hungry for more and more information and nothing less than the full story will satiate them. He feels like they're like a pack of wolves, backing him into a corner and he has nowhere to hide. He has to speak up— say anything and be honest and then they'll leave him alone.

But he can't.

There's an army of them, thousands upon thousands of terrifying monsters that he loves so dearly but are terrifying nonetheless. He's not ready to explain why this whole event affected him so—he hasn't even told George yet—and he feels so stuck and tired. It's either share all or none, and he can't decide which is worse.

“Okay, um, that's pretty much it. We just wanted to talk about that really quickly.” George turns toward Clay suddenly and a wave of panic overcomes him. “Do you have anything you want to say, Dream?”

His breath stops. His heart races. He grips George's hand probably too hard and the universe seems to wait for his very response.

“I...”

He bursts out crying, unable to hold in all this shit that's been swirling inside him. He buries his face in his free hand, feeling the sting in his eyes and the tears falling rapidly.

He's so *weak*. He can't do this anymore. He can't breathe. He can't move, he can't think. He's probably making even worse of a mess by crying on stream but he's cared so long that he no longer cares anymore.

George's hand escapes his but only to pull Clay into a hug, one which he accepts wholeheartedly, clinging to George as if he's his life line.

“It's over. I turned it off.” George says softly, repeating it over and over again until it becomes the only thing that Clay can focus on, the only thing that calms him down through this storm of emotion. He listens to it, feels its very meaning until he eventually falls asleep, too exhausted to cry anymore.

Everything

Chapter Summary

Angst. Need I say more?

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas!!!!

I'm back again with another slow update and I'm going to be honest I held onto this chapter for a little bit. I just wanted to make sure it was *chefs kiss* you know?

I missed you guys honestly, you're so nice so I guess this update is my little Christmas present to you <3

Also a teaser for the next chapters: certain characters will make appearances *cough* drista *cough* sapnap and bad *cough cough* tommy and the gang

Happy holidays ya filthy animals and enjoy

George is woken by the sound of a loud thud.

A couple hours ago, when Clay had cried himself to sleep, he managed to lug the bigger man onto the bed. He was somehow able to pull the sheets back with one hand, dropping Clay down onto the mattress with a huff, his smaller frame making it hard to keep the other upright for very long. George then carefully tucked the sheets around him, pausing as he noticed the surprisingly peaceful expression on his friend's face.

Clay's eyes were still red rimmed from what had happened only moments ago but the subtle tenseness that had scrunched his face up had vanished. He looked almost peaceful in the slim line of moonlight that peaked through his curtains.

George felt a wave of protectiveness overwhelm him at the sight and with it a desire to perhaps ban his friend from returning to his online platform at all. He just wants to see that smile on Clay's face, the one that can make anyone stop and stare at its blinding light. The only thing that makes it better is the sound of his laugh accompanying it, his signature wheeze that never fails to make George laugh alongside him. His hand almost unconsciously reached upward toward Clay's hair, brushing it away from his features before he flinched backward, and straightened up.

George has always kept his emotions close to the chest and even when it came to past relationships in his life, his feelings felt dulled, not as strong as they should be. It's this inability to express himself, almost a fear to do so, that's cut him off from anything romantic. Yet, in that one simple moment, he felt a surge of *something* that makes his heart stop.

Confused, he backed away from Clay, stumbling over to his side of the bed where he can't seem to get his heart to stop racing. He hardly ever feels emotion so strong that even as he settled under the covers, he couldn't quite decipher what it was that he even was feeling. It's certainly something he's never felt before, a warmth that overcame him even in this chilly evening.

Frowning, he found himself laying on his side, unable to take his eyes off Clay as he tries to decipher the stupid fluttery feeling in his chest. He eventually falls into a fitful sleep which was broken by the loud sound coming from his living room.

He opens his eyes, tempted to go back to sleep but as his eyes adjust to the darkness he notices Clay is missing from the bed. Awareness jolts through him and he pushes himself up to his elbows, eyeing the alarm clock by his bed in confusion as it reads that it's just after three in the morning. A time that definitely doesn't warrant Clay's absence or the loud noise he heard.

Perhaps at any other time George would have just waited for Clay to return, just accepting that the younger man was ruffling through his fridge for something to eat, but an unsettling feeling sits in the pit of his stomach. His thoughts flash to the intensely vulnerable expression his friend held only hours ago, and decides he should check on Clay.

He swings his legs out from underneath the warm covers, hissing slightly at the freezing hardwood floor but bears it as he shuffles sleepily from his room. There's still a definite relaxed state about him, his eyelids still drooping downwards and a lazy yawn about to spill from his lips, but as he takes a deep breath and the stinging smell of alcohol bites his nose, George is fully awake.

"Dream?" His voice comes out small and hesitant, walking forward with legs that are heavy, the scene seeming to unfold before him in slow motion.

As he makes it over to the light switch and turns it on, wincing only slightly at the sudden burst of light, his eyes widen at Clay's motionless form that lies in the middle of the floor, an empty bottle of vodka in his grasp with what looks like a case of beer scattered around him, some of the bottles shattered.

"Shit," George gasps and rushes to Clay's side, swiftly grabbing the bottle away from him. He distinctly remembers it being a little under half full, but now it's empty—a feat that is horribly

terrifying for one person who never drinks to drink in just one sitting.

He turns to Clay, his mouth opening in a way that wants to reprimand him but freezes. Clay's eyes are wide open, staring at the ceiling with the most glassy expression George has ever seen on his friend's expressive features. Normally there's that playful twinkle in his eyes or the lopsided grin that quirks his lips upwards. Now, it's just empty. If George didn't see the rise and fall of his chest or the mechanical blink of his eyes, he could almost be dead.

He doesn't know how long he's immobilized by this sight but before he can move, Clay's voice resonates through the darkness.

"It's been like this for as long as I remember. This...fear. I mean, I think people just thought I wouldn't do a face reveal because I didn't want my privacy messed with. Like sure, but it's more than that. Just every single fucking day I'm so scared and I just...George, I hate myself. I hate the way I look. I hate the way I sound. I hate this shitty body dysmorphia. I hate *being*. I thought I could get past this...this fucking diagnosis and just be normal but fuck, I did this to myself. I put myself in a position where one day someone was going to find me and they did and now I'm screwed.

I could have chosen to not do YouTube. In fact, I'm not sure why I did but maybe it's because I finally felt like I was finally in control of something. I could finally be me but without showing who I really am. But now they've seen me and I'm so scared. I can't stop now but I can't go forward. I just...I've been living this lie that I'm okay for so long that I don't know who I am anymore. I'm not okay. I feel like everyone has seen what I've looked like now but I just want someone to *see me*, you know? See past everything that I've created and hid behind and could just tell me who I am. I—"

"I see you." George says, the words escaping him in a flurry of passion.

A tear pushes itself out of Clay's eye and there's a moment of silence. "And what do you see?"

George's voice drops to a whisper. "I see everything."

Clay's eyes widen but George rushes forward before he can stop him. "You are just full of this light that blinds everyone around you, even yourself. Clay, you just being you has inspired so many people and I wouldn't be here without you." His voice breaks and he's shocked to find tears in his own eyes. "So don't you see, Clay? You're more than what you think you are because you're everything. You're *my* everything so please, keep fighting. For me, okay?"

Clay's green eyes widen and they're shining, as he nods. His shaky hands manage to push himself upwards and throw himself onto George, holding onto him as if it's the last thing he'll do.

George can hear Clay's heart beating fast in his chest, George's own marching at the same rhythm and he starts to think that maybe it all makes sense. That absence of love, that void of swirling confusion within him about his feelings, seems to be answered as he holds his best friend in his arms.

Maybe he's never explored his sexuality, but maybe it doesn't matter because he's never felt like giving up the world for the singular person that resides in his arms.

Nick

Chapter Summary

George sends a call for help to his friends.

Chapter Notes

Hey. So I'm alive. And I'm really sorry this fic is taking so long to finish much less even update. I feel like I've said it a lot but I guess I'll say it again. Shits kind of hit the fan this year (I mean like I kinda feel like it's done the same for everyone but yeah).

Plus writers block is fun.

So I could have done a cheap ending for this or maybe just discontinued it but you know what, fuck that I'm gonna finish this bitch and it's gonna be damn good. Prepare to see me power through this with the sheer power of spite and love for our boys and you guys.

Also if you wanna see me attempt to be a streamer peep me at the user ghostlightt

Next chapter will be coming in a week or less. That's a promise and motivation for me so feel free to bully me if I don't make it in time lol

Last but not least thank you all for being so supportive. Your guys comments really makes it all worth it.

P.S. Check the updated tags for teasers of what's to come.

Nick finds himself lying in his bed, scrolling through social media absentmindedly. There's perhaps an urge to get up and do something, knowing that he's doing nothing productive at the moment but to be honest, after smoking a few bowls he doesn't really feel like doing too much.

He really shouldn't have smoked that much anyway, but with how everything is going online he needed to relax somehow. Which is why he finds himself scrolling through Pinterest.

Which was a huge secret from like everyone, by the way.

One of his friends from high school made him download it for a group project to browse through ideas, but the action of sorting pins into their respective categories was cathartic. That and it was one of the only social media sites that excluded the ‘social’ aspect of it. He knows he doesn’t have it as bad as Clay or even George, but still. He craves the mindlessness of it and there are sometimes good memes on there.

He starts feeling drowsy and sighs, realizing he’s probably not going to get much more done that day and might spend the rest of the night napping and eating. Maybe he’ll muster the courage to play Minecraft but it might be more bearable if he gets Karl to play with him.

The game just seems a lot bleaker with his two best friends being MIA.

His phone buzzes with a Discord message and he catches a glimpse of the username before he’s clicking on the notification.

Can you call?

It’s from George in a private group chat with him and Bad. Nick glances to the clock on his nightstand which reads nine at night. Doesn’t that mean it’s what, three in the morning for him?

Sure. He types back, Bad also replying quickly and waits for the phone to ring. It’s nearly instantaneous.

“Hey what’s going on, George?” Bad’s voice comes in gently, and Nick’s dumbass nods and it takes his smoked out brain a second to realize it’s a phone call and he needs to actually reply.

“Yeah man, why are you up?”

A sniffle comes through the line and then the sound of broken glass being swept up. The two are silent, confused by the noise and as Nick draws in a breath to speak he almost misses the soft sob.

His eyes widen and sure enough, George’s icon had lit up green, meaning it was *him* who made the noise. Nick had never heard him cry before.

Bad breaks the silence. “George? Are you okay?”

“Um...” another snuffle. “No.”

Maybe it’s a little insensitive but it comes out before Nick can really think about it. “Dude, what the fuck is going on?”

George takes a deep breath. “It’s about what happened. The video.”

The two don’t need much more explanation than that.

“Clay’s...well, he’s not taking it well. I thought I could handle it but when I came to the kitchen I--I found him on the ground surrounded by alcohol and he wasn’t *moving* and...I was so scared. I talked to him and some of the things he said...I don’t know what to do. He told me he’d keep trying but I’m just scared I’ll wake up and I’ll find him like that again but that time he won’t...he...”

George breaks down into soft cries.

Nick feels stunned into silence. He knew this whole situation would be hard on Dream, hell it would be hard on any faceless content creator. He remembers the scrutiny of when he did his own face reveal and how rather cold people can be when it comes to being online.

Yet, Dream had always seemed invincible. He was this sort of god in the Minecraft world, with allegations of cheating, fraud, and many personal insults thrown at him but he always emerged with a confident smile and a claim that it didn’t really bother him. He always seemed to transcend any sort of expectations people had for him, someone who appeared to be untouchable.

Nick even recalls the time after Geosquare released his video about Dream’s speedrun, he had called him. Dream’s emotions had been all over the place ranging from anger to resigned sadness. He’d even cried, but at the end of it all he had just sighed and said: “Guess I’ll have to prove them wrong.”

Even when Dream and George had a big fight about a year ago and hadn’t talked for a week, Dream’s confidence never shook in the fact that he *knew* he could make it up to the smaller man.

Even when one of Dream's grandparents passed away, he handled the grief with grace, never once spiralling.

He is untouchable. Or rather, was.

For Nick to hear how his best friend's unshakable confidence had been broken utterly shattered his expectations for this situation. It wasn't that big of a deal, right? Dream had always planned on doing a face reveal. He would just shake himself off and continue onwards like he always has...right?

His ears ring as he hears Bad comforting George, and in his heart he knows this situation is very much different than the others but he doesn't know how. He thought he knew Dream inside and out but this is something beyond his comprehension.

He's always been a shoulder to lean on for his friends, but this time? He's out of his depth because Dream never really needed to be comforted before.

How do you fix something that was never meant to be broken?

"What if me and Bad went to visit you two?" Nick suddenly blurts. "Do you think that might help him...and you?"

There's that soft staticky silence before a very small voice responds.

"Would you do that? Please?"

Nick is already powering up his computer. "Don't worry, Gogy. We're on our way."

a growing warmth

Chapter Summary

Clay is a simp.

Chapter Notes

Ayo it's me I'm back and wow I got this chapter out at a decent time let's go. Fair warning that this chapter is mainly filler but like don't worry things will get very spicy again I promise ;D

Also now that I've gotten my writing mojo back there may or may not be another idea in the the works....stay tuned, my friends.

Anywhos, love you all and thanks for supporting me!

Clay hardly remembers what happened when he woke up, everything fading in and out until he finds himself regaining clarity as he sits at the table with breakfast before him. He chalks it up to not being entirely sober and sighs, the pounding headache that racks his brain a painful reminder that he probably drank way more than he should have.

In fact, he shouldn't have been drinking at all.

A swell of guilt rises up with him as he stares down at the Eggo waffles that George somehow managed to make without burning himself, his appetite fading quickly. The idea that he quite literally took advantage of George's hospitality after everything that he had done for Clay makes something ugly stir in his heart.

He thinks of everything that has happened these past few days and can't help to think that he's been a burden.

First off, he's the one who initiated this whole chaotic scenario of coming to George's place without even asking permission before booking the flight. Then, what should have been a joyous meetup between the two has resulted in a stressful couple of days where Clay finds himself spiraling and depending on George to hold him afloat.

The motion and sound of fingers snapping in front of his face jerks him out of his thoughts and he's greeted with George's smiling face.

"Earth to Dream. Come in."

He blinks a couple of times. "Hi, I'm here now."

"So," George says, "I know things have kind of not gone as planned."

Understatement of the century.

"But I'm determined that we can make this better."

Clay searches his expression, not used to the usually pessimistic George being so optimistic. He bites anyway. "Okay, how?"

"Well, since neither of us really want to leave my flat, I decided to bring the fun to us."

"Uh, what do you mean?"

George flushes slightly. "We may be having guests soon."

"You're joking."

"Bad and Sap kind of asked and then I said yes and I think it would be good, you know?" George stammers but then a darkness pulls his lips into a frown. "I mean, I just want to make you feel better after...well, after everything."

A warmth instantly rushes into Clay's heart and he stands shakily, George looking up with a questioning look in his gaze. He pulls the smaller man toward him, encapsulating him in a hug that he didn't realize he needed so desperately.

He feels George stiffen against him in surprise but quickly melt into his grasp, his smaller hands

reaching across Clay's back gently. He finds his fingers tangling themselves into the back of George's shirt as the longer he's held, the harder it seems to let go. Just even thinking that makes him notice the smaller body against him trembling.

Perhaps it's then he feels the slight shift of attitude within him. He's felt almost cold as he pictured himself in this place where he's almost a parasitic entity latched to George's kindness.

Yet, as tightly as he's clinged to George over all these years—him being the first one called for anything related to his channel, to simply falling asleep over the phone, or even back when they were in school and helped each other with homework—George has held just as fast. It's what they would call a symbiotic relationship rather than parasitic, and as Clay feels himself being prevented from letting go even in something as mundane as a hug, maybe that distinction was all he needed to feel alright leaning on his closest companion.

"Are you okay?" He asks softly and to that George snorts.

"I'm supposed to be the one asking that."

He makes sure to pull away just enough so they can face each other, but their arms still encircle each other's bodies. He feels a little pink dusting his cheeks at the intimacy of the moment, noticing the same dusk set on George's pale face, but in his overpassion of emotions he can't find it in himself to care all that much. Or rather, he cares a whole lot to the point where refuses to let go.

"But are you? Okay, I mean."

George meets his gaze for a moment before looking down slightly. "This isn't about me."

Clay huffs. "I'm asking about you."

"I'm not the one who should be upset by this whole situation." He says, voice dropping so it's barely a whisper.

Clay tilts his head slightly in confusion. "You were there and are stuck inside with me because of the video too. I'd say you can be upset."

“Are you sure?” George’s eyes stare up at him, wide in concern and poorly suppressed guilt, the whole expression somehow adorable to Clay and he feels himself soften.

“Yeah, I’m sure.”

“Okay,” George lays his head down on Clay’s shoulder. “Then I’m pretty upset about it.”

“Well, luckily, we have some special guests coming—”

“Dream, I’m the one who literally just told you that.”

“Fair, but I repeated it for effect. Also, a part of me still doesn’t believe it.”

He can sense George rolling his eyes. “Okay, well, you’ll believe it when they get here and Sapnap starts bullying us both.”

Clay laughs. “Mostly you, you mean.”

George pulls away from their hug only for Clay to notice him pouting slightly. He gives Clay a stink eye before laughing in his quick hiccupy tone. “So, are you proud of my waffles?”

“I am,” He says with a smirk. “You managed to only burn them a litte.”

“First of all, ouch. Second of all, I’m still injured from the last time so my mobility is a bit off. Lastly, I don’t even know why I’m explaining myself to you.”

“Because I’m just better at making waffles.”

“Whatever you have to tell yourself, Dream.”

They both stop, having a silent battle simply through their narrowed gazes. Clay almost feels a

smile break his facade before noticing how close George is all of a sudden. He seems to realize the same thing at the same time, both their eyes widening slightly but the tension still heavy through the air. Neither of them move away.

Clay's gaze meets George's, feeling the other's breath ghost over his own lips and as George glances down, Clay feels his heart pound. There's an unanswered question hanging in the air but before either can move, another set of waffles pops out of the toaster and the both of them jump in surprise.

Clay can't help but be disappointed as George turns away from him, suddenly a lot colder than before without George in his arms. He tries to brush it off mentally but like the other day before this whole mess, he's struck by the idea that he *really* likes his best friend.

A fond smile spreads across his features and it's only when George gets the first waffle out of the toaster that Clay realizes that the buzzing anxiousness within him since the video came out has been forgotten during the latter half of their conversation. Even now, it remains at a level that he's able to quickly dismiss as soon as his gaze resettles on a particular person who at that very moment, managed to drop his second waffle on the floor.

finally

Chapter Summary

spiciness

Chapter Notes

Hello friends,

I've returned with another spicy chapter and as promised this one is definitely not filler. This chapter speaks for itself so I'll let you get right to it!

Also be sure to check out my socials:

<https://linktr.ee/ghostlightt>

The rest of the day seemed to pass in relative ease in that George and Clay didn't do much besides play Minecraft by themselves, both looking at the streaming and video setup George has with mixed emotions.

George can't help but be a little startled at his lack of enthusiasm towards it. He's never once really felt like he needed a break from YouTube or Twitch. It honestly felt like he was just playing a game and thousands of friends decided to join him as he did.

Now, with what happened to Clay, the internet feels a lot less like a friend and more of someone that he thought he knew but really didn't. He hates feeling that way. He knows most of their fans wouldn't do anything to upset them but the fact that one did so much damage and hurt makes George wary.

He looks up from his computer towards Clay, who is curled up on the bed with his gaming computer. His dark blonde hair is mussed up and half hidden under a hood and George can't see his full face as he hides it in the front of the sweatshirt. His green eyes are lit up however, and though he looks happy or cozy to anyone else, to George he looks like he's hiding from something.

Clay glances up and meets George's gaze with a tilt of his head. "What's up?"

“It’s nothing.”

Clay sits up straighter and closes his laptop. “George, come on.”

George pauses and pulls his knees up to his chest, resting his head top of them. He stubbornly taps his fingers on his knees in the pattern of a song he once knew when his parents had him do piano lessons, avoiding the piercing green eyed stare that’s directed towards him.

Clay waits patiently for him, a rare moment and something that marks his sincerity so George sighs, cracking under pressure.

“Why do you hide your face?” He finally asks and despite his voices’ softness, it comes across as deafening in the silent room. “You don’t have to tell me but I just noticed how you seem to hide it even off of YouTube.”

“You’ve noticed?”

“I notice everything about you, Clay.”

His eyes seem to widen at George’s bold statement, the other man blushing at it as well, and after a moment nods in a sort of acceptance.

“It’s called body dysmorphic disorder.” He says, voice nearly a whisper. “I’ve had it as long as I could remember and it makes it really hard to show myself. My face especially. I just...hate the way I look and I feel like everyone else does too.”

“They don’t.”

Clay huffs. “I know that. It’s not something this thing allows me to believe though. I can’t control it.”

George thinks for a moment. “This is why the whole video situation is so bad, isn’t it?”

He nods in agreement silently and leans back against the pillows. George follows his movement and feels this desire to protect the other rise up within him. It's something that's normal but the intensity is something he's unfamiliar with—no other person got this sort of rise out of him.

It's like earlier, when they were in the kitchen and George could swear there was a live wire connected between them as electricity seemed to spark through his veins. The way they both seemed to lean in too close for comfort but to George it wasn't uncomfortable either. It was...delightfully overwhelming.

“...to George? I repeat, Earth to George.”

“Huh?” He's startled out of his thoughts and Clay raises his eyebrows and smiles that crooked smile that George's heart can't help but skip at.

“You're looking at me like...” Clay trails off, his smile faltering for a more thoughtful expression

“Like what?” George questions, feeling a deep blush settle onto his cheeks.

The two seem to stare at each other for a long time, this time not a battle but more of an exploratory mission into uncharted territories. It's less of acknowledging an unanswered question but seeking the truth behind it.

Clay seems to take the leap. “Like you want to kiss me or something.”

George is almost about to deny it, his usual mechanisms of hiding rising to the surface but Clay's expression gives him pause. His wide green eyes tell a story of someone who just bared themselves to another, of someone who held little esteem for themselves and was shocked that another would hold themselves on such a pedestal, someone who would fold into themselves if the answer was no.

And yet, George wants this.

He's never wanted anything like this and it's a realization that he's shocked that he's never come to before. How could he have been so blind? When they met up at the airport and he was so blinded by the other, when Clay seemed to make him laugh and smile so much, when even in his darkest times all George wanted was to be by his side and make him feel better.

It's almost so obvious that George feels like an idiot but not so idiotic that he would pass up this beautiful opportunity, the chance to finally answer the question between them.

He stands from his chair, Clay watching him with wide eyes and with a sudden confidence that seems to possess him he reaches down and cups the other man's cheek.

He leans down, lips a breath away from Clays and he stares intently in the others eyes. "And what would you do if I did want to kiss you?"

Clay seems stunned for a moment before a smirk pulls across his lips, and it's like seeing all of this past week's endeavors wash away. George can visibly see a sense of confidence and happiness fill the other and mischief flits across those green eyes of his.

"I would do this."

George feels hands settle onto his waist and before he can even blush, Clay has pulled him down onto the bed and is on top of him.

"Is this okay?" He whispers and George pulls him forward by his collar.

"Just kiss me already."

Clay obliges without any other words and the next thing George knows there's warm and soft lips against his own. His heart seems to explode at the contact and for a second he's so enraptured by the fact that Clay, *Dream*, is kissing him that he just is frozen.

Clay pulls away but their lips are still practically touching. "Kiss me back, you loser."

"Right, right." He stammers and when Clay surges forward again, George can feel the vibrations of his laughter against him.

And kiss him back he does.

Their lips move in tandem with each other and one of Dream's hands captures his own, resting against the side of his head while George's other hand rests behind Clay's head, pulling him impossibly closer. His heart feels like it's going to burst out from within him at the lightning that races from his lips and the close proximity of their bodies pressed right up against each other.

George finds his hand sliding lower, down to Clay's spine to which the other man hums in approval. The very sound sends a wave of heat through him and before he can act on it, a phone's ringtone cuts through the silence.

"Are you kidding me?" George whispers, and Clay sighs, sitting back on George's hips as he scoops up the phone.

"Yo, George it's Sapnap. For our flight tomorrow—"

"George is currently busy. Call back later." Clay says, and George tries to hold back laughter at that.

"Wait, Dream? What do you mean busy? George—"

Clay hangs up the phone, tossing it aside and smiles down at George. "Think he's going to be mad?"

"Probably."

"He probably knows about us."

"That's true." George says, then sighs impatiently. "Can we go back to doing what we were doing?"

"So impatient."

And despite his words, they're tangled within each other the next second.

awake and awake again

Chapter Summary

Lots of fluff

Chapter Notes

Hello friends!

Happy Mother's Day to you all and I hope you're having a wonderful day :)

Anywhos, prepare yourself for an absolute boatload of fluff because that's pretty much what this chapter is. Like tooth rotting sweetness because you know what, I've been a mean writer and maybe they, especially Dream, deserve some happiness.

As for a teaser for next fic, it's finally got a title: The King's Bane. It's going to be a Dream SMP fic so prepare yourselves for that :)))

Lastly, be sure to check out the linktree below so you can find me on my Instagram, Discord, Twitch, and more!

Enjoy the chapter!

<https://linktr.ee/ghostlightt>

George finds himself waking up early the next morning to a lack of warmth, a part of him simply knowing that Clay is missing even without being fully awake. He blearily opens his eyes, his right arm patting the bed beside him in search of the other.

His arm accidentally swats Clay around his waist to which he mumbles an apology, but he's not sure it's too intelligible. It's then his brain registers that Clay is not lying down next to him but instead is sitting up, his eyes barely able to make out that he's staring down at his phone.

"Clay?" He slurs out, this time in a way that likely doesn't sound like gibberish. "What time is it?"

Clay turns toward him finally, his free hand coming over to brush his hand through George's curls. "It's like four in the morning."

George's nose scrunches up. "Ugh, why are you awake?"

"Couldn't sleep." He says softly, seeming to get lost in thought when stating that. George uses his arm that's around Clay's waist and pulls the other down beside him, burying his face in Clay's chest.

"Just count minecraft sheep."

George can feel him laughing. "Really? That works?"

"Yeah, well, it only works if you take it seriously."

"Oh, don't worry, I'm taking it super seriously."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Yeah."

George pulls his head back to peer at him, an eyebrow raised that Clay can barely see in the dim lighting. "Says the guy who just laughed at it."

Clay pulls him in tighter. "I was just surprised at the genius of your idea, that's all."

George pretends to preen at that. "I know. I'm just so much smarter than you."

"Whoa," Clay flicks him in the forehead to which he squawks in protest. "I didn't go *that* far."

"It was implied."

Clay reaches over and starts to tickle him and George screeches in horror, fighting tooth and nail to get away from him. He feels himself gasping with breath and as Clay stops, laughing too hard to

continue, George feels a warm smile being placed on his lips at seeing Clay be happy, something that's been hardly visible these past couple of days.

He finds himself giving Clay a kiss at the sight, drawn to his lips like a moth to a flame. "How about that? Does that make you feel better?"

"Hm," Clay muses, a fond look taking over his features. "Maybe if you tried again it would work?"

George snorts but finds himself happily complying, this time being pulled into a deeper kiss that makes him feel like he's melting into Clay's gentle embrace.

They end up falling asleep quickly after that.

Clay finds himself waking up late the next morning to George sitting up in bed, talking loudly on the phone.

"Listen, Sapnap, I don't know if you're trying to talk to me in code or—"

"I'm sorry, what?" Clay rubs the sleep from his eyes and blinks owlishly at George who perks up at the sight of him awake then rolls his eyes.

"I'm pretty sure Sapnap is trying to tell me that his Uber driver is a serial killer but let me put him on speaker."

He pushes a button and then a familiar voice starts to fill the morning air. "--not a joke, bro. I could be totally muffed if you don't like...ring the village bell."

"You're an idiot, Nick." Is all Clay says, shaking his head with a fond smile. "How far away are you anyway?"

“I’m glad to hear you’re so uh, interested and not concerned, for my...oh fuck it, what if he was a serial killer, huh? Also why do you sound like you just woke up? George, didn’t you say you were still in bed?”

Clay looks at George desperately. “I, uh...”

“Oh my god, you totally fucked didn’t you?”

“Sapnap!” George exclaims, his cheeks immediately turning a brilliant shade of pink and Clay wheezes, nearly choking on his own breath in the process.

“No! I mean we are together now—”

“Clay, wait—”

“*Clay?*”

“Yeah, is it so hard to believe he calls me by my first name, Sapnap.”

“Yes! Oh god, I thought I would be spared from the ship. It was bad enough when you were friends and then you were ‘totally in love with each other friends that wouldn’t say anything about it’ and now...”

“Try not to suffocate.” George drawls, earning a soft swat from Clay.

“Nick—”

“Oh, don’t you namebomb me like Gogy over here.”

“It’s literally not the same thing.”

“Sure, sure. Wait, am I the first person you’ve told?” Clay can tell there’s an immediate shift in Sapnap’s mood, hysteria turning into smug pride that oozes from the phone’s speaker. “I am, aren’t I? Ha! Millions of people waiting for you two to date and I’m the first to know.”

“You’re our best friend.” George points out as if it’s obvious, which it should have been to anyone but Sapnap in this moment. “Also, millions of people aren’t waiting for us to date.”

“Yeah, they are.” Clay says in tandem with Sapnap, only succeeding in making George roll his eyes.

“Haven’t you seen the fanfiction, Gogy dearest?”

“Okay, but seriously, how far away are you?” Clay asks which earns him a pronounced ‘um’ to muffled chatter.

Then, finally: “Oh, I guess we’re just down the street. You lovebirds better be ready to get the party started.”

“That depends.” George says, Clay watching a smirk spread over his features.

“On what?”

“On whether you’ll start the party.”

A pause. “That’s the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard. I don’t even...ugh, just don’t talk to me ever again.”

Clay snickers. “Well, it’s not like we can start a party without Bad anyway.”

“It was literally just a phrase. Like, ugh, you two are made for each other, you know that?”

George and him glance at each other, a light smile ghosting each of their lips as a gagging noise erupts from the phone.

“Ew, you two are probably making kissy eyes at each other now. I’m hanging up.”

Clay feels bold at this statement. “Kissy eyes, you say?”

“Bye!”

They hear the dial tone as George laughs, throwing his head back in a full body laughter that melodiously fills the room. Clay can’t help but pull the smaller man against him, feeling oh so warm at the sound of George’s happiness as he peppers kisses against his jawline.

“Clay,” George whines, and Clay settles his head on George’s shoulder, raising an eyebrow. “We’ve got to get out of bed.”

“Sapnap can wait.” He says mischievously, pulling George down with him as he lies back against the pillows.

George lands on top of him, settling his legs on either side of Clays waist. Clay feels as if an invisible arrow shoots through his heart at the sight of him, brown locks all mussed from just waking and pupils blown wide at their position.

“C’mon, George,” he says, his own voice coming out unrecognizable, all sultry and deep. “Kiss me.”

And, of course, George can’t resist his command because the next moment warm lips are pressed against his own.

He feels lightheaded at their kiss, bringing his hands up to George's waist, letting them travel from there to his upper back, just wanting to have George closer and closer. He opens his lips slightly and feels the ghost of the others’ tongue just as a loud ‘ding’ of the doorbell cries out through the space.

George pulls away, his pale cheeks a deep red, looking adorably flustered as he stammers: “Oh, I guess he’s here.”

Clay sits up so George falls right into his lap, pulling him in for another kiss that ends way too quickly for his liking. “We’ll have time later, babe.”

George flushes a deeper red at the pet name but a smile also spreads over his lips as he leans forward eagerly for another kiss just as another ring of the doorbell calls out insistently.

They both sigh, then share a grin, disappointed at their lack of time together but equally excited to see their friend, and get up to greet Sapnap.

Sapnap

Chapter Summary

Sapnap finally arrives.

Chapter Notes

Hello all,

So haha, I'm not dead and yes this fic is still ongoing. I will finish this fic no matter what...even if it takes me forever. But alas, please enjoy.

“Holy shit, you two have been living like this?” Nick barges through the doorway as if he owns the place, his gaze scrutinizing the somewhat messy apartment. Clay glances back guiltily at the depression hole that has become George’s apartment, their countless takeout dishes lying about the place alongside many strewn about blankets, pillows, and clothes.

To be honest, he doesn’t think either him or George thought too much about it with everything that had been going on.

George shoves Nick, eyes rolling. “Wow, that’s really the first thing you’re going to say when you meet your best friends?”

“Who said you were my best friends?”

“Uh, I just did.”

“Okay, fair, but did I ever say that?”

“Who else do you fly out to see at a moment’s notice?”

Nick pauses and then rolls his eyes. “Alright, fine, you got me.”

Clay pats him on the shoulder. "Love you too, buddy."

It's then that Nick's gaze turns serious, and Clay feels a sense of dread pool within him. A selfish part of him hoped that they could avoid the subject of his forced face reveal for a moment longer. Or maybe they could avoid it forever. Yet, like George just mentioned, he did fly out to meet them at a moment's notice.

"How are you doing though?"

Clay opens his mouth, instinctively ready to say that he's fine, but hesitates and glances at George. George's large brown eyes gaze at him softly and he nods encouragingly. Clay's resolve breaks at that.

"Not great." He says, crossing his arms over himself. "We haven't really left the house since it happened."

Nick winces. "Sorry about making fun of how the apartment looks. I didn't really think of that."

"It's fine. I didn't realize how bad it had gotten until you said something."

"Well," Nick says, dropping the duffel bag of stuff he was holding over his shoulder to the ground with a definite thud. "I came here to help and if it's cleaning George's smelly apartment then that's what I'll do."

George, who had already silently started picking up soda cans from the coffee table, rolls his eyes at the other man. "It wasn't smelly until you got here."

"Oh yeah?"

Nick rushes forward toward him and George shrieks, dropping the garbage that was in his hand to dive behind the couch.

“George, we’re supposed to be cleaning the place.”

“C’mon, George.” Clay adds and when George’s honey colored eyes meet his, they’re betrayed.

“You’re siding with *him* on this?”

He throws up his hands. “Hey, I’m just pointing out the fact that you littered in your own apartment.”

“Says the guy who's been drinking all my soda.”

“Okay, fair.”

“And you have been ordering food for us because you insist that it’s not something that I can do because your food taste is superior.”

“Well...”

“And has been falling asleep early so we never end up cleaning.”

Nick whistles. “Damn, expose him.”

Clay throws up his hands. “Hey, I’ve been going through it these past couple of days. I think I deserve a little leeway, right?”

George scrutinizes him, his lips set in a fine line but Clay can tell that he’s already relented as his eyes are soft and teasing. Clay feels his heart melt at the sight and can feel a smile playing on his lips.

“Oh no,” Nick says, startling the two from each other’s gaze. “I thought you were gross on the phone but it’s even worse in person.”

George beams. "You're welcome."

"Uh, I didn't thank you."

"Too bad."

"Oh it's on." Nick rushes forward again, this time catching George, pulling his head under his arm and ruffling his hair.

"Clay! Help!"

He couldn't help even if he wanted to because he's laughing way too hard, his stomach already aching from his mirth. It's perhaps then that he feels that spark of something akin to hope prickles its way across his skin in a happy dance of sorts, revitalizing his very cells with a happy sort of energy that he'd been missing for so long.

It's maybe then that he starts to believe he'll be okay.

It's around dinnertime when George gets a text and not from whom he's expecting.

They'd all been expecting Bad to arrive that very day and were eagerly waiting around in his living room with Nick and Clay bickering over an episode of Seinfeld that played on his small television. George himself is laying against Clay, his head in the other's lap and his feet propped on Nick's as he sprawls across the couch. The two had raised their eyebrows initially at the position, Nick making a joke about his stinky feet and Clay running his hand through his curls, but then they all but ignored him in a heated discussion of whether or not aliens were real.

His answer had just been a simple ‘yes’ that was not sufficient for their theories about Area 51 and the like.

The text in question, turns out to be from a group chat formed between Wilbur, Tommy, and Tobey and is in all caps. From Tommy, of course.

Tommy: GOGY WE WANT TO SEE THE BIG MAN. ITS URGENT

A flash of concern flits through him, making him glance up to Clay’s features, who at that precise moment has adorably scrunched up his nose in thoughtful concentration.

George: Uh...when

Wilbur: Im free the day after tmrw

Tobey: Em too

Tobey: Me

George sighs. A feeling of protectiveness settles through him at the notion of overwhelming Clay with people. People that hadn’t seen his face except in the video that was undoubtedly all over their feed.

George: I’m not sure it’s a good idea.

Tommy: We want to make suer the big man is alright

Wilbur: Up to u

Tobey: Yeah :)

He almost wants to argue against them more and instead pokes Clay's arm, making the other look down in fond curiosity. He simply holds up his phone displaying the conversation.

Clay sucks in a breath, suddenly looking a bit pale. He seems to cave in on himself, as he shrugs indecisively.

"What's up?" Nick sits up straight, concerned at Clay's response.

"Wilbur, Tommy, and Tubbo want to visit." George says and Nick raises his eyebrows.

"But they know what's going on right?"

George nods. "That's why they want to come. I don't think—"

"I want them to come." Clay blurts out suddenly and the other two look at him with wide eyes.

"Are you sure?" George asks, worried by the other's quick change of emotion. "You don't have to."

"I think it'll be good...especially after what happened. I want to be okay with people seeing me."

It's at that precise moment, whether the world considers the timing to be ironic or not, that the doorbell rings, signalling the arrival of Bad. Nick glances at his phone and snorts.

"Bastard didn't even text us that he was here."

"Maybe he wanted to have it be a surprise." George offers, sitting up but immediately leaning his body back against Clay. He has a sense of the other maybe not being as okay as he said he was about the whole Wilbur, Tommy, and Tubbo situation and that protective need still hovers within him, making him forget about any usual boundaries.

Plus, they're dating now, right? Invading the other's space is practically in his job description.

Clay smiles at his antics, and an arm is wrapped around him. "You know we should get up, right?"

"Eh."

"Eh?" He laughs. "What a very intellectual conversation we just had ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming to the George show."

Nick claps dryly as he stands to get the door, slowly shaking his head at the two of them as neither makes a move to get up. Instead, George finds his body curling up even more around Clay's body, almost instinctively at this point, as Nick opens the door.

"Hey Bad."

"Hey Sapnap!" Bad's voice chirps before laying his eyes on the others. "Hey—WHAT THE MUFFIN?"

"Surprise?" Clay offers, and George can visibly see him trying to hold back laughter.

"No, this needs an explanation. Like a good one because you know I've been waiting for you two to get together for like years, right?"

"Wait, what? WHAT?" Now Clay is nearly shouting in surprise. "How did everyone know but us?"

"Because you two are idiots." Nick says and George sticks out his tongue.

"Shutup, Sapnap." He says in tandem with Clay, and the two grin at that.

"Oh you muffins are so cute."

"That's Bad's version of saying you're disgusting." Nick counters and Bad gasps.

“No! I actually meant it.”

“Oh, sure.”

“Okay, but seriously you two.” Bad takes up what was once Nicks’ spot on the couch. “Spill. What happened?”

George can’t help but think back to when he first saw Clay at the airport, his dark blonde hair all windswept and his piercing green eyes wide with delight as he saw George for the first time. A soft smile tugs on his lips at the thought.

“Well, it all started for me when...”

Cars and Questions

Chapter Summary

Clay deals with the days before Tommy, Wilburs, and Tubbos arrival.

Chapter Notes

So....hey. Guess who's back? Because my friends, I refuse to give up on you. Even if this shizzle takes me like 500 years to finish I will finish it. But hopefully it doesn't take that long haha. In fact, I hope to finish this somewhat soon and move onto my next project which will be another DNF fic. Don't worry, I'm going to write all of that one before I even think of posting so there will be consistent updates.

Anyways, I would like to thank everyone for your patience and hopefully you enjoy the latest chapter of my story!

The day after tomorrow comes quicker than Clay would have thought and liked.

They'd spent the night talking to Bad, explaining their adventures so far and to no one's surprise they ordered food which only contributed to the mess that they'd just cleaned. The only one who really complained was Nick which was ironic considering it wasn't even his apartment.

George was the one who pointed that out and was thus on the receiving end of another chase that ended with him getting poked in the side way too many times.

They went to bed early as both Nick and Bad started to nod off whilst talking, both suffering from extreme jet lag. Of course that didn't make Sapnap tired enough to not whistle as Dream followed George to his bedroom. Bad simply swatted the other and gave them a not so subtle thumbs up.

The next morning was eventful to say the least. As if not learning from previous events, George had thought it would be a good idea to wake up early and prepare breakfast for everyone. What he didn't realize is how loud he could be and ended up waking both Nick and Bad up.

Clay himself had actually been jolted awake due to the clang of pots and pans, and was surprised because to his extensive knowledge of George's cooking, well, George had no knowledge of cooking. So to hear pots and pans was a little concerning. It wasn't so much in regards to whatever

concoction he would whip up but how he might injure himself again.

Sighing, he threw his legs over the side of the bed and padded out of the bedroom to the kitchen and the connected living room right as Nick started to yell in protest.

“Holy shit, George, what time is it?”

“Uh, it’s like eight.”

“Get the fuck back to bed, oh my god.”

Bad's response is a slurred: “Language!”

Clay knew it was bad when he entered the room and Nick was about to get up from where he and Bad shared the couch, a murderous glint in his eye. He waved Nick back down and upon entering the kitchen spotted George who was holding a pan in each hand and was eyeing the fridge.

Clay encircled the other's smaller body from behind, pressing a kiss to his neck and snatched the pans from his hands. “Let’s go back to bed.”

“But—“

“No buts.” Clay said simply, setting down to the pans and tugging George back to the bedroom, fully aware the other two are watching them hopefully. Well, Bad was watching them hoping for another couple hours whereas Nick was ready to commit a crime to get more sleep.

“Clay, I’m not tired and—“

He made sure to use a low tone. “We don’t have to sleep, babe.”

George froze at his tone, eyes widening and cheeks darkening. He’s immediately more pliant and Clay used his advantage and tugged the other to the bedroom with the other two calling out thanks from their spots on the couch. He was sure there were some expletives on one person's part, but it

was to be expected at the hour it was. Even Clay was still tired.

Upon entering the bedroom, Clay pulled George back down onto the bed, the smaller of the two landing practically on top of him with a surprised 'oof' and a giggle. Clay used this opportunity to pepper the other with tons of kisses along his nose, cheeks, and finally landed a long kiss on his lips.

"Clay." George said softly as he pulled away. "I was thinking that we should talk."

Clay sighed at that, hoping to continue their current line of business. "About?"

"Just...well, about the others coming tomorrow and Bad and Sapnap."

"What about them?"

George rested his chin on Clay's chest with an emotional expression. "I'm just worried about you. It can be a lot to have more and more people seeing you after what happened."

Clay's automatic response was: "I'm fine."

It was clearly the wrong thing to say as George immediately sat up at that, turning away from him. Clay winced, sitting up as well and tried to pull George back toward him. To his surprise, George shook him off and stood, back still facing him.

He seemed to take a deep breath and then he finally turned to face Clay, a slightly miffed expression had settled on his features.

"I couldn't really sleep." George confessed. "I just...I worry, you know? The other night when I found you just on the ground was probably one of the scariest things I've ever seen. I don't want to see you get to that point again, okay? I understand you've had to hide this your whole life but I don't want to be another person you hide this to. I want to help. Please, let me help."

Clay watched the whole thing in stunned silence, stunned by the thick emotion that caused George's voice to tremble slightly. He nodded silently at the end, accepting George's request.

“Okay, I’m sorry.” He said, crossing his arms over his body as he took a deep breath. “Um, I’m feeling pretty nervous about it actually. I think it’s good for me to see Tommy and the others but I’m still scared I think.”

George sat back down and when Clay reached for him again, he buried himself in Clay’s embrace. They both laid back on the bed together and George gave him a small kiss.

“Sorry for getting kind of upset.”

“You don’t need to be.” Clay responded back simply. “I’m used to not saying anything, not even to Sapnap or Bad, so this is...new.”

“Yeah?”

“Not a bad kind of new. It’s almost relieving to get this off my chest. I just can’t help but think that maybe I chose the wrong profession sometimes.”

George nodded. “Sometimes I think that way too. Like I don’t think either of us expected this to get to the scale that it has got to.”

“But would you change anything if you could do it differently?”

George met his gaze and, turning his head to the side questioningly. “Would you?”

Clay found himself thinking about it. His mind of course brought up the events that just brought discord in his life and all the pain that it caused. Yet, that seemed like such a small blip in a world that brought him so many friends and fans. He pictured all the laughter he’s had at silly games like when he played as a wolf on George’s channel, or the heartracing bouts of victory he achieved when he slayed the hunters in Manhunt.

So maybe his face has been exposed and maybe that hurt but he found himself then thinking, staring into George’s honey colored eyes, that maybe he’s okay.

“No, I don’t think I would change a thing.”

Later that day, Clay found himself sitting in front of George's computer booting up Minecraft, his friends around him doing the same. George sat beside him, or more accurately on top of him as they shared the same chair at the desk. Clay smiles contently as he rests his head atop the smaller man’s shoulder, watching the bar load across the red screen.

Meanwhile, Nick lay on his stomach on the bed where Bad sat against the bed frame, pushing up his glasses as he stared intently at his laptop's screen. To be honest, Clay was shocked that George’s flimsy wifi was holding up with them all using it to its full capacity but alas, if it worked perhaps he needn’t think too hard about it.

George’s screen finished loading and then Clay starts to get nervous, as if remembering what they were doing at the time. To start reintegrating himself back into the world, he thought it would be prudent to connect with his friends, besides the ones coming the following day of course, by playing a bit on the SMP. He didn’t feel entirely confident about it, hence why George would be doing all the actual work.

As much as he feels okay now, and despite the fact that he made a sudden revelation that he wouldn’t change a thing about his current path, the video that he’s sure everyone has seen by now haunts him.

Yes, it would be simply safer for him to defer to George today.

He watches nervously as George navigates to the multiplayer menu and pulls up the server, but his cursor hesitates over it. He turns his face slightly towards Clay.

“Are you sure you’re ready? You don’t have to do this, you know.”

Nick and Bad look up from where they’re sitting, equally concerned expressions on their features and Clay shrugs, putting on a brave face.

“It’s just friends, right? Nothing to be scared of.”

They all nod and George opens the server, watching it load. If Clay’s being honest though, as the little square of pixels loads he finds himself more and more terrified at the questions that he knows are going to bombard him as soon as it loads. Everyone is going to want to know about everything. They’re going to want to dissect him. They’re going to—

Dream joined the game.

There’s a pause where Clay can hear the blood roaring in his ears and feel his body begin to tremble as he holds on tighter to George but then the messages appear.

<TommyInnit> DREAM

<The_Eret> Heyyyy

<Antfrost> Howdy dream

<CaptainPuffy> Welcome back :)

Clay rests his head on George’s shoulder with a smile, feeling an instant wave of relief. A part of him even wonders why he had been worried in the first place. They were his friends, everyone there were people that he had placed trust in. Of course they wouldn’t pry.

“Do you want to say anything back?” George asks, and Clay can tell he’s smiling too.

“Yeah, here.”

Clay moves his arms from George’s waist to the keyboard and George makes a noise of complaint.

“You’re squishing me.”

“Oh hush you big baby.”

He sticks out his tongue slightly and George crosses his arms, pouting slightly as Clay types.

<Dream> Heyo. Missed you all

<TommyInnit> Missed you too big man

<The_Eret> Ditto

Sapnap joined the game.

BadBoyHalo joined the game

<CaptainPuffy> Oh wow they're all here except George

George huffs and swats Clay's hands away from the keyboard.

<Dream> hi it's george now

Punz joined the game

<TommyInnit> GOGY

<Punz> where?

<Antfrost> he's playing on dreams account I think

<Punz> I c

TommyInnit whispers to you: dnf is real

Clay laughs at that, causing Nick to ask: "What? Did someone whisper to you?"

George snorts. "If only he knew."

"What did he say?"

"Only that DNF is real."

Nick and Bad smirk, both of them sharing a glance.

“So are we pretending to keep things platonic tomorrow for the others or...?” Bad trails off.

George flushes red. “I don’t think I—”

Clay looks at him in shock, his heart dropping.

“--could pretend to not be with him.”

“Aw.”

Nick wrinkles his nose. “That’s sickeningly sweet but is that okay with you, Clay? I mean you’re already showing your face so do you really want to drop another secret like that?”

Clay, who had been dazed by a sudden wave of relief and what can be described as complete adoration for the man sitting on his lap, looks up at his name in confusion. “Hm?”

“Oh nevermind you’re too lovestruck to even care.”

“I mean...” He trails off as George giggles, and he nuzzles his face back in George’s shoulder, the remainder of his reply not even necessary.

“Okay you’re in love, it’s beautiful and now let’s just play Minecraft, yeah?”

“Fine by me.” Clay says with a laugh and looks back at the screen to see that several more players have joined and it appears Ranboo was trying to steal something from someone and Tubbo is hunting a bee to everyone else’s amusement. He smiles and finds himself delving back into the game.

Lying in bed that night after watching Cars with the rest of the boys was supposed to be at the least relaxing, but instead of that, Clay could feel nothing but trepidation. He knew tomorrow would be alright, especially after today of playing with everyone he knew, yet he still felt nervous.

On top of that, he just couldn't seem to sleep.

Sighing, he sits up, and is about to get up and perhaps get a cup of water when he feels an arm snake itself around his waist.

"Don't go."

Clay looks down, surprised at the vulnerability in George's soft voice and feels a surge of warmth.

"I'm not going anywhere." He says as George's eyes flutter open, his normally warm brown eyes pitch black in the darkness. He can make out a faint smile on George's features then.

"Yeah?"

Clay smiles back. "I promise."

"Well, in that case, can I ask you something?"

Clay lays back down, curling himself around George's smaller body, wrapping his arm around his waist and intertwining his leg over George's. "What is it?"

George's eyes start to shut, sleep consuming him. "Will you...be my boyfriend?"

Clay is stunned into silence. Boyfriend? He can't help but feel overwhelming joy at the question and before he can even answer, he notes that George has already fallen asleep.

"Fuck." He mutters, brushing George's hair away from his eyes fondly. "I'll be whatever you want me to be."

And with that, he's able to fall asleep peacefully.

Titles and Masks

Chapter Summary

George and Clay address George's question while awaiting their friends.

Chapter Notes

What's up y'all! I'm back with another spicy chapter for you all that I hope you like! Next chapter will be out in about a week or so make sure to look out for that and let me know what you think :)

Love you all and thank you!

George wakes the next morning remembering everything. He shoots upright, eyes wide, subsequently waking the man next to him.

“Hey,” Clay murmurs, his green eyes blinking confusedly. “What’s up?”

“I...” George stammers and feels himself going completely red. “Do you remember what I asked you? Last night?”

That’s when a smirk starts to play on Clay’s lips. “Yeah, I do.”

George covers his face with his hands. “And?”

He feels hands encircle his own, pulling them away from his face and he finds himself nose to nose with Clay. He’s immediately struck by the beauty of the man before him in his piercing eyes, suntanned face that splashed with freckles, and his plump lips that are so invitingly close.

“I said I would be whatever you wanted me to be.” Clay says softly, leaning forward so his breath ghosts over George’s features. “That includes being your boyfriend.”

George can’t help but smile at that. “Really?”

“Is that surprising?”

“Well, I don’t know, you’ve just had a lot going on in you life and I didn’t want to intrude on that but before I could even think I was asking and I mean it’s been on my mind a lot I just—”

“ *George .*”

He blinks. “Yeah?”

“I *want* to be your boyfriend.” Clay says with a chuckle. “No matter what’s happening right now.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah, *oh .*”

“I mean, I just—”

Before he can even finish what he’s saying, there’s lips pressed against his own. He wraps his arms around Clay at the action, feeling that pleasant dazed feeling overcome him. Kissing Clay was like fireworks and basking in the warm sun at the same time yet it always left him feeling breathless as if he’s run a marathon. He practically feels faint at the action and when Clay eventually pulls away, George is practically panting, his heart racing even though it was nothing but a sweet and slow kiss. God, the things this man did to him.

George is about to go in for another kiss, addicted to the feeling that he gets every time they do it, when a loud bang resounds through the room from the door.

“Wakey wakey, lovebirds!” Nick’s overly joyous voice pierces through the once peaceful morning and George can’t help the groan that escapes his lips.

“Go away, Sapnap.”

“No can do, *compadre* . We only have like an hour until they’re supposed to get here and I’m

guessing neither of you are decent for company and wouldn't be if I just left you to your own devices."

George feels his features turn a bright shade of red as he stammers out: "I'm not---It's not like that!"

Clay snorts. "It's totally like that."

"Since when have you gotten so bold?" George whines and Clay gives him a quick peck on the lips.

"Ah, you know what they say. Love makes you stronger."

"Who said that?"

Clay looks affronted. "I did."

"You guys are disgusting, I just want to say that." Nick says through the door and Clay and George share a grin, fully aware that they were definitely and unashamedly 'disgusting' and proud of it.

After all, who else could call Clay, Dream, the world renowned Youtuber, their boyfriend?

About an hour later, they're all waiting on the couch and kitchen in George's apartment. Bad is fiddling with one of the pans left by the sink, staring at it intently as if it'll clean itself if he stares long enough. Nick sits at the kitchen table and is staring at him open mouthed, a dazed and also incredulous expression on his features, probably thinking that Bad should just clean the dang thing already. George meanwhile is dozing, his head on Clay's lap and gangly limbs hung over the side of the couch which leave Clay himself to be sitting on the remaining cushion of the couch with a pained expression. It's quiet, too quiet as they all seem to be thinking the same thing.

“They’re late.” Clay finally notes and the silence finally breaks.

“Ugh, tell me about it.”

Bad frowns at Nick, finally noticing his expression at his antics. “There was probably traffic or something.”

“Okay, then why haven’t they texted us?”

George snorts. “Someone’s impatient.”

“I’m bored.” Nick whines, resting his head on his chin. “Plus the suspense is killing me.”

“Tell me about it.” Clay mumbles and doesn’t think anyone will catch it, but his all too attentive friends look at him with pity.

“It’ll be fine, Dream!” Bad smiles his way. “You know they won’t treat you any differently.”

“I know.” He says absentmindedly but he’s already thinking that this whole thing is a mistake. He can feel himself shaking, already picturing them just staring and staring and staring. He needs to calm down but he can feel himself spiralling already as if it’s an out of body experience, noting analytically that his breath is quickening and his surroundings are spinning.

“Clay.”

It’s a voice in the darkness, and before he knows it there’s hands in his own and warm brown eyes meeting his.

“We can call this off, Clay.”

“No!” He shakes his head, blinking tears out of his eyes. “I have to do this.”

George seems confused by his response. “Why?”

“Because I can’t face my audience if I can’t face my own friends.” He says simply and George nods, a look of understanding coming across his features but it doesn’t eliminate any of the worry that furrows his brows together.

“Okay, then how about this. Start by breathing for me then tell me what we can do to make this easier for you.”

Clay wipes his eyes and obeys, taking a deep breath like George told him to, focusing his energy on his boyfriend before him. He focuses on George’s messy brown hair that’s attempted to be combed to the side, the soft hands in his own, the sweatshirt he’s wearing with the signature Dream smiley face. He starts to feel calmer and his voice seems in reach.

“Can...can I wear a mask?”

The question slips out before he can even think about it and before he can take it back, say that it’s a stupid thing to do in front of his friends, George is already nodding.

“Do you have one in your suitcase?”

“Yeah.” He says softly, feeling his eyes fill again, warmed by George’s understanding.

“Okay, let me go get it.” George looks towards Nick and Bad, who hover at the edge of the couch with worried expressions, and gives them a slight nod.

Nick immediately takes his cue and kneels in front of Clay. “Hey.”

Clay snuffles. “Hey.”

“How are you feeling?” Nick asks apprehensively and Clay sighs.

“I feel really stupid right now.”

Bad takes his spot next to Nick, a frown evident on his features. “Why?”

“I mean, this isn’t supposed to be that big of a deal. It’s just a few friends. If it wasn’t for this stupid disorder—”

“What?”

Clay immediately freezes. “I...”

“It’s okay, Dream, you don’t have to tell us. We’re just worried about you.” Bad says and puts a hand on Clay’s shoulder.

“No, I think I should probably explain. It’s body dysmorphic disorder. It...makes it really hard to show my face to anyone. It’s why that video was so bad and why I haven’t done a face reveal. I just...I want to get past it though. That’s why today is so important because maybe if I can just *be* with Tommy, Wilbur, and Tubbo then things will be alright. Then maybe I can go back to my fans and videos and all that.”

Nick has a strange look on his face, almost as if he’s impressed. “Look, Clay, that’s a lot you’ve been carrying around. I’m glad you told us but don’t feel like you need to prove anything to anyone.”

Bad nods. “I remember first showing my face on camera and that was really scary so I can’t imagine what you’re going through. I think today is a good idea though. You know that they’ll be nothing but supportive.”

“Yeah.” Clay agrees and feels nothing but relief telling his friends about everything. It feels like a weight has been lifted off his shoulders.

George enters back into the room at that moment, holding a black facemask in his hands. “Is this it?”

Clay nods and is glad that he decided to even pack the mask, a part of him somehow knowing that he might need it. He even considered wearing it around George when they first met but there was something about the other man that comforted him rather than made him feel self conscious about his appearance. It was a feeling he got around no one else—not even Nick or Bad.

He supposes that's what love does to someone.

There's a sudden knock at the door and Clay quickly grabs the mask as Nick heads over to it, pausing with his hand hovering over the doorknob. "Everyone ready?"

Clay slips the mask on and subconsciously moves closer to George, his hand lacing itself into the other mans and nods. They all seem to be looking at him as if he's going to change his mind despite his nod but at last Nick turns the doorknob and the door opens to reveal three smiling faces.

Tommy, Wilbur, and Tubbo

Chapter Summary

The gang all meets up.

Chapter Notes

Hello again friends! I'm back with another spicy chapter in our adventures with Dream and George :) hopefully I did justice trying to write the other characters because honestly I love Tommy's and Tubbo's dynamic. It was pretty fun to write not going to lie and hopefully it came across that way! As always, leave a comment down below and check out my other social media:

Youtube: Creative Shenanigans

Wattpad: anisa__angel

The first thing that Clay hears when Tommy, Tubbo, and Wilbur walk in the apartment is: “Dream!” before he’s practically tackled by the two boys.

“Oh!” He gasps in surprise but can’t help the genuine smile that comes to his face. The nervousness he felt beforehand seems to melt slightly at the gesture and he wraps his arms around the two. “Well, hello there.”

Tommy pulls away first. “Hey, big man. How’s life treating you?”

Wilbur immediately swats him on the head. “Why would you ask him that?”

“No it’s fine—” Clay starts.

“Oh, I forgot!” Tommy facepalms. “By the way, cool mask!”

Tubbo beams up at him. “Yeah, I think it makes you look like Ranboo. But for yours you should paint a smiley face on it so it’s like part of your brand.”

“Or you could get a green mask.” Tommy points out and Tubbo nods at that.

“Then paint it.”

“You do realize that he’s like a millionaire and can probably afford to custom make a mask for himself?”

“Oh yeah! I bet he could start selling it in his shop too. That would be cool!”

“Yeah and—”

“Oi, you two.” Wilbur puts his hands on the tops of both of their heads, which was easy with his height. “Let the man breathe.”

Unbeknownst to them all, Clay had intertwined his hand in George’s for support because he felt nothing but the biggest wave of relief at their entrance. They didn’t mind his mask like he thought they would. They even thought it was cool! He never could have anticipated that and for that he felt overwhelming gratitude.

“Wilbur, thank you but it’s okay.” He says. “It’s good to see you guys.”

The younger two of the crowd seem to have calmed down at Wilbur’s chastisement, and Tommy even starts to take off his signature puffy blue jacket but at Clay’s words the attention is brought back to him. Or rather, the hand that was in George’s.

There’s a distinct pause with all three of their guests staring and Clay can practically see the cogs turning in each of their brains as George’s pale face turns red as a tomato.

“Here we go again,” Nick mutters from behind them as their three guests explode with energy.

“Wait a minute—” Wilbur starts before Tubbo and Tommy start yelling.

“GOGY! YOU DIDN’T TELL ME YOU HAD A BOYFRIEND!”

“AND IT’S DREAM!” Tubbo adds.

“DREAMNOTFOUND IS REAL I KNEW IT!” Tommy practically sings and that’s when Wilbur cuts in.

“Shush, children! My god it’s like you never saw this coming.”

Nick laughs at that. “Yeah, like we all saw it coming.”

“Yeah but I always thought they were joking!” Tommy protests.

Clay and George share a glance at that. “Well...”

“So it was a joke?” Tommy asks, his eyes wide and intrigued.

“For a while there, yeah.” George replies. “I guess neither of us realized how serious we actually were.”

Tubbo looks thoughtful at that. “So wait a minute. How new is this exactly?”

“Uh, like a week.”

“A WEEK?”

“They’ve already been practically dating for so long.” Nick points out and Bad nods.

“They call like every night and all they talk about is each other whenever they’re apart.”

Clay frowns. “That’s not—“

Nicks pretends to swoon and speaks in a falsetto tone. ““Oh Sapnap, George was so cute today. Everything he does makes me want to kiss him.””

Clay laughs. “I do not sound like that.”

“But you agree with everything else I said?”

The group all looks around at each other with matching smirks and George only blushes even more.

“And then there’s George.” Nick says and clears his throat. ““Dream is so hot. Every time he gets away from me in manhunt it’s makes me want to—““

“Sapnap!” Wilbur exclaims between laughter. “There are children here.”

Tommy snorts. “First of all, Wilbur, I’m not a child.”

“Doubt.” Nick mutters.

“Hey!”

Tubbo shrugs. “Technically out of the both of us, you’re the one who’s still a child. I’m eighteen now, remember?”

“Wow, I thought you were on my side.”

“I am!”

“In the words of Sapnap here, ‘doubt.’”

George rolls his eyes. “Why don’t you guys come in instead of lingering in the doorway?”

“Ah, so he finally invites us in.” Tommy says and that earns him another swat on the head by Wilbur.

“He would have done so earlier if you weren’t so chatty.”

Tommy grumbles something under his breath that Clay doesn’t quite catch but Tubbo laughs at it. They all start to take off their coats then, Tommy’s still half off from when he tried taking it off earlier, and George slips his hand out of Clays to grab them and stick them in a closet to the right of the door.

“I have a switch if you guys want to play.” George says casually, causing Nick to gasp dramatically.

“You had a switch this entire time? Wow, maybe this place isn’t as lame as I thought it was.”

“Shut up, Sapnap.” George says and Clay can just picture him rolling his eyes from where he’s still hanging up coats.

The rest of them all migrate over to the living room and the kitchen, each of them ending up on different chairs, maneuvering them to face the television.

“Your flat is really nice,” Tubbo comments to which Nick laughs.

“Should have seen it a couple days ago.”

“What happened a couple of days ago?”

“Mostly fast food.” Clay muses. “I might have turned the apartment into a depression hole.”

They all wince but Tommy, being the boldest of the group asks: “So how have you been about that, if you don’t mind me asking?”

Clay pauses, thinking about his next response. He could talk about how he’s felt emotionally but he feels uncomfortable even thinking about it. It’s not that he didn’t like the three of them but they aren’t as close to him as George, Nick and Bad are. What could he say then?

He realizes he’s been quiet for a while and finally admits: “I don’t really know where I’m going to go forwards from here, you know?”

Tommy grabs a controller and settles on the couch. “I mean, you’re going to keep streaming and stuff right?”

Tubbo sits beside him. “Yeah, like at this point I think that’s all you can do. You already kind of addressed it when you streamed that one time so now you kind of just have to get back into things.”

Clay is a little stunned by their answers, but then wonders why he’s even surprised. He knows that he has to go back eventually to streaming and videos but it had been so pushed out of his mind it hadn’t occurred to him that it would have to be soon. Hell, he couldn’t even stay at George’s apartment forever either.

In essence, this whole bubble that he’s placed himself with George is so very precariously fragile and it’s about to shatter.

He’ll have to go home eventually. He’ll run out of the millions that Tommy joked he had without an income. Nick, Bad, and George will all be back at their respective homes thousands of miles away from him and he’ll be alone again but this time he can’t leave because everyone knows what he looks like.

He doesn’t really realize he has stopped breathing until a hand is gently placed on his arm. He can instantly tell it’s George, some part of him being able to just sense it, and he rests a hand on top of George’s. He takes a deep breath then, and looks back up to Tubbo, Tommy, and Wilbur’s worried gazes.

“Yes I suppose I’ll have to go back won’t I?” He says with a chuckle. “That’ll be interesting.”

“It’s not going to be easy but you know that your fans love you, right?” Wilbur points out.

“True.” He admits, but his mind is back on the stream they had held not only a few days ago that had gone not so well. Would it be a repeat for him if he tried again or would he be able to stream?

As Nick hands him a controller and they all move on from the topic to discussions of lore on the SMP, Clay can’t help but think that he will try again and soon. He has to and not just for the fans, but for himself. Being a Youtuber is what he loves and he’s not going to give that up. Besides, he knows he’ll have all these amazing people by his side if he tries but for now, he decides, he will focus on destroying them in Mario Kart.

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